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PhD Thesis

by

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Interpretation of Chinese Modern Poetry in Light of a Proposed Theory of *Shiyi*

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Declaration

This is to certify that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.



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ABSTRACT

Modern Chinese poetry has since its inception been subjected to unfavourable comments as compared to classical Chinese poetry, which can be construed as the result of the alleged unintelligibility problem encountered in interpretation of poetry. This thesis attempts to find out if it is justified to attribute modern poetry's poorer reception to the alleged unintelligibility problem. Accordingly, a purported criterion of poetry assessment, *shiyi* 詩意 (literally "poeticalness"), as well as a theoretical framework based on *shiyi*, is formulated primarily in light of Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's relevance theory and Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics. Whereas relevance theory is a cognitive pragmatic approach focusing on recovery of meanings of an utterance by tracing the authorial intention through relevance, Ricoeur's hermeneutics sees textual interpretation as relying on a hermeneutical circle through which a reader produces a world of the text, itself also a means by which the reader attains or enriches self-understanding. To incorporate the speaker-centred relevance theory, Ricoeur's comparatively reader-oriented model, as well as other related text-focused approaches into the proposed framework, the central concept of *shiyi* is put forward with a view to bridging the distance between emphasis on author, reader and text. The framework formulated should be more applicable to literary texts and less vulnerable to the intriguing authorship problematic. In addition, a "subtlety-unintelligibility continuum" is posited and developed within the framework to identify and account for the differences in *shiyi*, as well as to provide a clear characterisation of *shiyi*. The framework thus represents an interface between the linguistic, the philosophical and the literary perspectives. The overall objectives of this thesis are: (1) to prove that the proposed theory of *shiyi* and its underlying framework are theoretically and practically valid by putting the framework to the test through thoroughly analysing a number of representative modern Chinese poems, and (2) to justify or refute the propriety of attributing modern poetry's poorer reception to the alleged unintelligibility problem based on findings of the analysis of poetry mentioned in (1).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have provided me with support in whatever forms during the period of my writing and revising of this thesis, in Edinburgh and in Hong Kong.

In particular, I am obliged to express my indebtedness to Prof. Dr. Joachim Gentz, my primary supervisor, and Dr. Julian Ward, my secondary supervisor. With his exceptional intelligence, profound erudition and generous patience, Prof. Gentz was especially instrumental in directing as well as guiding me in this academically-challenging pursuit. Dr. Ward painstakingly vetted and improved my English translations of Chinese poems, only based on which the analysis in this thesis was made possible.

I have also to record my gratitude to Prof. Michel Hockx (SOAS), who kindly shared with me a soft copy of his inspirational talk touching on unintelligibility, and to Prof. Peter Lamarque (University of York), who greatly enlightened me through our email exchange focusing on intrinsic value.

Last but not least, I must acknowledge my sincere thanks to Dr. T.M. McClellan, former Senior Lecturer of the University, who not only introduced me to the PhD programme but also oversaw my earlier work as my primary supervisor, and an outstanding mentor.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND:

Since the May Fourth Movement in 1919,¹ *baihua* 白話 (vernacular Chinese) has gradually replaced *wenyan* 文言 (classical Chinese) as the standard form of written Chinese, including that of Chinese literature.² Over nearly a hundred years of development of new poetry, two contesting trends, namely *dazhonghua* 大眾化 (popularisation) and *chunshihua* 純詩化 (purification of a poem, or becoming a [Chinese-style] pure poem³), have been identified,⁴ to which the theoretical problem of *dong yu budong* 懂與不懂 (understanding or not understanding) has remained central.⁵ Whereas *dong yu budong* is actually a neutral expression when referred to the reader's reaction to reading of a poem, a more technical term, *huise* 晦澀

¹ See Chow Tse-tsung 1960, 271-272 and 278, where Chow argues that the *new literature* movement, which started earlier in 1916 and revolutionised written communication, was a crucial part of the May Fourth reforms, and that it was in 1918 when new poetry was widely experimented with by the new intellectuals.

² Wai-lim Yip 葉維廉 has even defined *baihua* as “the written colloquial language adopted by Chinese writers after the May Fourth Movement in 1919 to replace the literary or classical Chinese, *wen-yen* [i.e. *wenyan*], as the primary means of literary expression” (1970, xi).

³ The translation of “[Chinese-style] pure poem” is adapted from Gao Wei 2008, a major research on the sinicisation of pure poetry in China.

⁴ See Liu Jiye 2008, 1-3 for the differentiation. In short, *dazhonghua* refers to (the realisation in poetry of) the ideal placing emphasis on the interpretation of poetry in the context of its functions, uses, social nature and political inclinations; and *chunshihua* refers to (the realisation in poetry of) the ideal placing emphasis on the inherent and self-sufficient artistic value, artistic rules, self-regulation and independent status of poetry. (Ibid., 1) In other words, *chunshihua* is comparable to advocating “art for art's sake”. As with other differentiations of theoretical opposites, this differentiation of poetic opposites is more about theorising on the perceived phenomena (for poetics in this case) than accurately representing the actual phenomena (in the literary history in this case) over time. A case in point is Adele Austin Rickett, who remarks that “[e]xpressions of criticism on literature, particularly poetry, are to be found in the works of countless literary figures in China for the past two thousand years, as well as criticisms of and commentaries on the works of others[, of which s]ome have been didactic in approach, others have stressed art for art's sake.” (1977, ix.)

⁵ Liu Jiye 2008, 172. See also Zhang Songjian 2012, 158-164 for an account of the general development of new poetry from *chun si* 純詩 (pure poetry) to *dazhonghua shi* 大眾化詩 (popular poetry).

(unintelligibility), is frequently used instead in the debate haunting almost all the poets and readers of new poetry.⁶

Chinese poetry is nowadays primarily composed in *baihua*, inevitably bearing some of its perceived strengths (viz. being a more effective carrier and representation of modern thought),⁷ as well as inheriting some of its perceived weaknesses (viz. being clumsy, lengthy, overly “westernised”, etc),⁸ as compared to *wenyan*.⁹ Still, however, it is classical poetry that has received universal admiration and academic recognition in world literature,¹⁰ while its modern counterpart has been the subject of serious study only until fairly recently.¹¹ With such contrasting reception to these two “sub-genres”¹² of Chinese poetry, and especially when many criticisms levelled at new poetry have been centred on its alleged 晦澀 *huise* (or **unintelligibility**, to be detailed later), it is proposed to solve the **research problem** of this thesis,¹³ namely the justifiability of attributing the poorer reception to Chinese new poetry to the alleged unintelligibility problem, through assessing a sample of representative new poems from a reader’s viewpoint by means of *shiyi* 詩意 (literally poetic essence or

⁶ For instance, a large number of essays discussed in Liu Jiye 2008, 172-179 have adopted *huise*.

⁷ In late-Qing Dynasty and the early-Minguo period leading to the May Fourth Movement, it was probably which was the better medium of poetry writing that mattered, but nowadays *baihua* has established itself as the official language, and this comparison between the two especially in terms of acceptability of the medium has lost most of its practical relevance. See Section 1.5.A for more detail.

⁸ Yu Guangzhong 余光中, for instance, has elaborated on the weaknesses in Yu Guangzhong 1994. Besides, Wong Wai-leung 黃維樑 has criticised and attacked various weaknesses of *baihua* in Wong Wai-leung 1983.

⁹ James J.Y. Liu’s articulate analysis of the grammatical aspects of the language of classical Chinese poetry (1962, 39-47) will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.A.1.

¹⁰ This is generally the case as far as great traditional poets are concerned. Criticisms at lesser poets are not uncommon though. Burton Watson, for instance, suggests that “[t]he best [Tang] poets did occasionally dare to use a new image, and [...] expanded and enriched the tradition. But the lesser ones, as in any age or language, were content merely to manipulate the stock of images bequeathed them by the past.” (1971, 133.)

¹¹ Yeh 1991, “Prologue”, 1. Since the time of publication of Yeh’s book, study of modern Chinese poetry has become more flourishing though, as evidenced by a surge in the number of published works and papers, some of which have been referred to in this thesis.

¹² Rather than regarding new poetry as a “new genre” (such as by Julia C. Lin, in Lin 1972, p. viii), this thesis considers new poetry and classical poetry as sub-genres of Chinese poetry.

¹³ Unless otherwise specified, *italics* and **bold** in this thesis are for emphasis only.

flavour,¹⁴ which can arguably be translated as “poeticalness”¹⁵), a generally acknowledged yet hitherto ill-defined criterion for artistic success of a poem used since the May Fourth Movement,¹⁶ which is considered to be potentially a much

¹⁴ *Shiyi* as a literary concept is not found in the popular versions of any significant traditional classic works of Chinese poetics, such as Liu Xie’s 劉勰 *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (501-502 AD), Zhong Rong’s 鍾嶸 *Shipin* 詩品 (ca. 513 AD), Yan Yu’s 嚴羽 *Canglang shihua* 滄浪詩話 (ca.1220s), Yuan Mei’s 袁枚 *Suiyuan shihua* 隨園詩話 (only two instances of “*shiyi*” found in self-printed 1st ed. in 1790, plus another two instances in its *buyi* 補遺 (addendum) completed in 1797, all referring literally to the “*yi*” of a “*shi*”, i.e. “the meaning of a poem”), Wang Guowei’s *Renjian cihua* 人間詞話 (1910) and Qian Zhongshu’s 錢鍾書 *Tanyi lu* 談藝錄 (1993, in which all 19 instances of appearance of “*shiyi*” refer to “the meaning of a poem”). If *shiyi* had been given serious scholarly attention elsewhere in the tradition, it is a safe guess that the term would have been included and properly addressed in the classic works already. *Shiyi* is defined, quite recently yet vaguely, as “像詩裡表達的那樣給人以美感的意境” ([it is that which is] like what is expressed in a poem, [i.e.] a *yijing*, which can provide a person [the reader] with a sense of beauty) in *Xiandai Hanyu cidian* 現代漢語詞典 (The Dictionary of Modern Chinese), p. 1,230. And, *yijing* 意境 is defined as “文學藝術作品通過形象描寫表現出來的境界和情調” (the realm or state and sentiment or mood as expressed through description by images in a literary and/or artistic work) (ibid., p. 1,618), and *meigan* 美感 as “對於美的感受或體會” (the feeling or understanding regarding beauty) (ibid., p. 929). N.B.: It doesn’t seem that the cross-referencing of these dictionary definitions can be satisfactory input in our pursuit of the definition of *shiyi*.

¹⁵ This poeticalness is read in its ordinary sense to mean being poetical, rather than its technical sense as used by, say, Roman Jakobson to refer to “poetic function”, which can be a function of any text, but only one, though major, function of poetry (Nöth 1990, 354-355 and Jakobson 1990, 77). In its ordinary sense, however, poeticalness is not suitable for translating our *shiyi* that is to be properly defined in this thesis.

¹⁶ *Shiyi* 詩意 is indeed frequently used in daily life and common-sense talk to refer to anything, a poem, a song, a film or whatever, that is, quite circularly, considered poetic. As for scholarly works, Hu Shi 胡適, in probably one of the earliest essays on new poetry, suggests that good poetry should be enriched with *shiyi* and *shiwei* 詩味 (literally poetic flavour or taste), but without defining either of the terms (1919, 14). In a letter addressed to Guo Moruo 郭沫若 in 1920, Zong Baihua 宗白華 uses *shiyi* to refer to some undefined good quality of a poem (2011, 20), and he also briefly discusses the definition of poetry in terms of *yijing* 意境 (literally a landscape of [artistic] ideas or conception), which he defines roughly as *shiren de xinling* 詩人的心靈 (heart or spirit of a poet), which however is without explanation characterised by *shiyi* and *shijing* 詩境 (literally a poetic landscape) (1920, 29-30). Similarly, Guo Moruo remarks that poetry should be a natural expression of *shiyi* and *shijing* in our heart, seemingly having taken the definitions of both concepts as granted (1920, 54). Feng Xuefeng 馮雪峰 compares poetry also in terms of an undefined *shiyi* (1951, 5). More recently, in

better yardstick than unintelligibility in this regard. To ensure a consistent and representative viewpoint for gauging of *shiyi*, the reader is for the time being assumed to be a member of a large group of people possessing roughly homogeneous knowledge, whom this thesis refers to as the **general reader**.¹⁷

Against the above background, this research intends to investigate, from the general reader's point of view, and primarily in light of relevance theory (as developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson)¹⁸ and Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics,¹⁹ the interpretation mechanism of Chinese new poetry in terms of the *shiyi*²⁰ perceived from reading such poetry,²¹ with a view to solving the research problem. Prior to

Lü 2009, a study on *shiyi* in works in *The Book of Poetry*, the meaning of *shiyi*, again, is taken for granted. In Yang Xi 2011, *shiyixing xushi* 詩意性敘事 (roughly “poetic narrative”) is used in characterising the movie *In the Mood for Love* (2000), yet without defining the expression. And in Sui Gang 2002, a book devoted to the discovery and creation of *shiyi*, no concrete definition is given to the term. It is only as recent as 2006 when Wang Jiaxing 王家新 tries to differentiate between his modern *shixing* 詩性 and his classical *shiyi* 詩意, suggesting, quite vaguely, that *shixing* is more concerned with the inherent nature, touching power and insight of poetry, while his *shiyi* is more concerned with the [reader's] understanding of poetry, the impression obtained from poetry reading, the aesthetic effect derived from a poem's *yijing*, etc. (2006, 175 and 178). What can reasonably be deduced is that the *shiyi* as heretofore used in the scholarly literature, as well as its related concepts such as *shijing* and *yijing*, can be regarded as some quality that makes a poem poetic, and/or the effect of a poem's being endowed with such quality, and hence its translation “poeticalness” above to incorporate both the cause (i.e. poetic essence) and effect (i.e. poetic flavour).

¹⁷ Thus defined, our **general reader** constitutes a specifiable broad-based category. This contrasts with what, for instance, Michel Hockx refers to as a “reception-oriented approach” focusing primarily on “readers' response”. See Hockx 1994, 24-25 for a brief introduction to his approach. For details on his approach vis-à-vis the one suggested in this thesis, refer to Chapter 2.

¹⁸ See Sperber and Wilson 2001. N.B.: Relevance theory is first used for developing the hypothesis presented later in this chapter.

¹⁹ Various works of Ricoeur will be cited where appropriate. N.B.: Ricoeur's approach will be identified in Chapter 2 for supporting and supplementing the hypothesis proposed in this chapter.

²⁰ This abstract concept of *shiyi*, which is left undefined or vaguely defined by many scholars and poets as seen in n.16, will be provided with a (preliminary) definition in a following section.

²¹ In this thesis, Chinese modern poetry or Chinese new poetry is defined as poems written since 1919, basically in *baihua* and not following prosodic rules of classical poetry. As for classical Chinese poetry, which will be used for comparison purposes where appropriate, it refers to poems basically complying strict prosodic rules of classical poetry, including *shi* poetry composed since Tang dynasty. In view of the scope of the thesis, *ci* 詞 poetry composed since late Tang and Song dynasty, *qu* 曲 of

practical analysis making use of the concept of *shiyi*, “subtlety” and “unintelligibility”, two other new concepts that define a proposed subtlety-unintelligibility continuum underlying a proposed theory of *shiyi*, will be posited to provide a clear characterisation of *shiyi*.

1.2 OBJECTIVES:

In order to solve the research problem of this thesis, namely the justifiability of attributing the poorer reception to Chinese new poetry to the alleged unintelligibility problem, through investigation of the interpretation mechanism of new poetry, it is proposed to introduce *shiyi* as a means of assessing poetry, which involves providing a clear characterisation of *shiyi*, as well as identifying and explicating the differences in *shiyi* in individual poems.

The objectives of the thesis are, therefore, (1) to prove that the (revised) hypothesis based on *shiyi* is theoretically and practically valid for its intended purpose (i.e. investigation of the interpretation mechanism of modern Chinese poetry) by putting it and its corresponding theoretical framework to the test through systematically analysing a number of modern Chinese poems; and (2) to resolve the research problem, i.e. to justify or refute the propriety of attributing new poetry’s poorer reception to the alleged unintelligibility problem.

1.3 METHODOLOGY:

To achieve the objectives of this thesis, the methodology as detailed below will be adopted.

1.3.1 Developing a Hypothesis

Drawing on some preliminary thinking on the topic under discussion, a hypothesis will be formulated based on a presupposed **background theory**, and

Yuan dynasty and poetry composed before Tang will not be covered in our discussion. Besides, classical poetry written after 1919 by modern and contemporary poets, which might have been subjected to a certain degree of *baihua* influence, will also be left out of this study.

primarily with reference to relevance theory as a point of departure.²² Subject to revision and refinement in light of findings of a literature review and a theorisation process that follows, this hypothesis should be built on a single criterion of assessment,²³ assumed to be *shiyi* (to be preliminarily defined shortly), so as to be in line with the principle of theoretical simplicity in the background theory.²⁴ However, the definition of *shiyi* is, by itself, not supposed to provide a concrete analysis device for the study of poetry. Some arguments have thus to be formulated to supplement the definition in order to make it operationally viable and readily implementable.²⁵ Under the arguments, terms used to characterise *shiyi* will be placed in their proper contexts for theorisation in order to facilitate their being investigated for

²² It should be noted that relevance theory *as a whole* is not the “**background theory**” based on which other foreground competing theories are compared, because it itself, as will be seen, is subject to adjustment in the theorisation process. For an elaboration on “background theory”, see Magnus 2005, 1,064, 1,068 and 1,070. What constitutes the presumed background theory in this thesis will be laid down where appropriate in paragraphs that follow.

²³ This single criterion can be, in terms of Luo Li-zong’s 羅麗容 terminology developed for her methodology of literary research, the *hexin fanchou/gainian* 核心範疇/概念 (core category/concept) through which the framework of a literary theory can be explicated, and all other related concepts can be related (2010, 33).

²⁴ Simplicity is counted as a **theoretical virtue** of a hypothesis in science and philosophy, against other virtues including “compatibility with the data, compatibility with background theory, explanatory power, fruitfulness (i.e. how many new ideas and applications the hypothesis suggests), and avoidance of intractable problems” (Daly 2010, 131 and 133). Intuitively, M.H. Abrams has remarked that “[b]y multiplying differentiae [...] we sharpen our capacity to discriminate at the expense both of easy manageability and the ability to make broad initial generalizations” (1971, 7). As a concrete example, Berys Gaut’s ten proposed criteria (including “(i) possessing positive aesthetic qualities [...]; (ii) being expressive of emotion; (iii) being intellectually challenging; [...]”) are considered too general, yet too numerous, to characterise what he sees as art: their generality renders them unable to pin down the characteristics of literature, and their being numerous renders them operationally inefficient to adopt in actual use. See Gaut 2005, and esp. 274 for his listed criteria. N.B.: The validity of the above theoretical virtues is presumed legitimate in this research, and can thus be considered constituting the **background theory**.

²⁵ In introducing their translation theory, Eugene A. Nida and Jin Di (2006, 5) suggest that there must be, in any activity, “certain underlying principles which relate to the nature of the task, and that an integrated set of such principles constitutes an underlying theory”. This view on methodology is adopted in this thesis as constituting the **background theory**, so that the arguments of the proposed framework, as will be presented shortly, serve as some preliminary proposed versions of the principles underlying the interpretation and/or composition of poetry.

appropriateness of adoption in the definition of *shiyi*. If sustained, the applicability of these terms, as well as the arguments, to such contexts also ensures that the concept they support, i.e. *shiyi*, is not merely given a dummy definition that is not actually applicable.

1.3.2 Conducting a Literature Review

A literature review will be conducted to examine if past and latest findings support the hypothesis based on a proposed theory of *shiyi*, and, more importantly, if insights can be drawn from these findings to amend and strengthen the hypothesis. Key terms temporarily defined in the hypothesis will be further conceptualised and modified as appropriate during and after the process of reviewing literature.

To enhance its comprehensiveness, this research has to touch on a number of fields of study, including poetics, literary theories, pragmatics and hermeneutics. Essentially, this means a **holistic** orientation²⁶ of research from three perspectives, namely the perspectives of literature, linguistics and philosophy. The inseparability of literature from linguistics is evidenced by René Wellek and Austin Warren's remark that "[l]anguage is the material of literature as stone or bronze is of sculpture", and the special treatment to language justified by their words that "language is not mere inert matter like stone but is itself a creation of man and is thus charged with the cultural heritage of a linguistic group".²⁷ This, of course, also highlights the close relationship between literature and culture. Besides, as *shiyi* is posited as the preferred criterion of assessment of poetry, its relationship with truth/truthfulness-seeking (to be detailed shortly) is better dealt with when philosophy is consulted, and hence the inseparability of literature and philosophy as far as the pursuit of this thesis is concerned.

Despite an unavoidable degree of subjectivity here in the selection of these disciplines,²⁸ earlier academic pursuit in which has led the writer of this thesis to

²⁶ In discussing the scientific synthesis of reductionism and holism, Willy Østreng (2007, 13-14) suggests that before the end is achieved in terms of a grand all-inclusive theory, the wholeness of some mid-range sort is the expected outcome.

²⁷ See Wellek and Warren 1973, 22. The relationship between the three perspectives will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

²⁸ As Tyler Burge (2010, 46) aptly informs us, "[w]e normally think of the physical world as an objective subject matter", which "is constitutively mind-independent", but "[b]y contrast, minds, beliefs, feelings, organizations, nations, languages, and theories are not constitutively

where he is positioned intellectually, it should be emphasised that all these chosen disciplines can be directed towards solving some problems related to valuation and/or assessment of literature. Bearing in mind all intellectual intricacies that may be involved,²⁹ a comparatively holistic approach is intended and advised as it duly incorporates the reductionist approach (which works under the assumption that “the dynamics of any complex system can be understood from studying *the properties of its parts*”) by asserting that the whole is more than or different from the sum of its parts.³⁰ Accordingly, while it may afford many useful insights by breaking complex systems down into their individual components by the reductionist approach, the reductionist exercise is only a first approximation of the truth, which is to be followed by putting the pieces together again by way of holism.³¹ Besides, Cao Shunqing 曹順慶 has argued vigorously for the meaningfulness of integrating or comparing Chinese and Western literary theories in the pursuit of common goals which are basic to both traditions rooted in human exploration of essences of literature.³² And hence the **interdisciplinary, holistic approach** is adopted in the thesis as the main guiding principle of the background theory. The success or not of such an approach, of course, has to be judged through direct application of its product, the (revised) hypothesis, to see if the objectives can be achieved.³³

Pursuing the holistic approach, it is necessary to first define and delimit the scope of study, before appropriate methods can be identified for enriching and supporting the hypothesis. The literature review will be conducted in this regard to place the hypothesis, based mainly on relevance theory, in the context of various relevant traditions/schools as well as latest academic outputs, with a view to defining and delimiting the scope of research and directing the focus to, among others,

mind-independent, and hence not objective”.

²⁹ Ming Dong Gu 2003a and Ming Dong Gu 2003b represent efforts to bridge different disciplines, and their strengthes and weaknesses will be discussed esp. in Sections 2.3.B.1.2.7 and 2.3.D.5.4 respectively.

³⁰ See Ø streng 2007, 12, italics in original.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Cao Shunqing 1998, esp. Ch. 2 of Part 1.

³³ Strictly speaking, favourable outcomes do *not* necessarily reflect success/validity of a proposed theory. Under close monitoring and with most relevant factors well accounted for, however, the application process is more likely to yield favourable outcomes, and if not, to provide satisfactory and convincing explanations for the unanticipated outcomes. After all, as Hans-Georg Gadamer suggests, “The only thing that gives a judgement dignity is its having a basis, a methodological justification (and not the fact that it may actually be correct).” (2004, 273.)

Ricoeur's hermeneutics as a major candidate for subsequent incorporation into a revised hypothesis. Given the complexities involved in solving the research problem, the literature review is to add true value to the thesis only if all theoretical threads of the theories and/or approaches considered appropriate and applicable for the purposes of this thesis are synthesised and wielded into one stronger analytical rope. Hence, extra efforts will be expended to identify parameters for the integrated approach focused on a single assessment criterion along the directions as pointed out by the key terms in the hypothesis in the course of reviewing the literature. This is in line with the principle of theoretical simplicity suggested above, which is also necessary for practical analysis of poetry in this thesis.

In selecting the theoretical threads, attention is given to those theories, approaches and concepts which bear relevance to our conceptualisation of the key terms (including *shiyi*), so that we are more concerned with what the theories, approaches and concepts in the works cited exactly mean, rather than which authors these theories, approaches and concepts are attributed to. As for Plato's poetics, for instance, the relevant section in the literature review is not intended to provide an accurate interpretation of Plato, nor is it interested in resolving any disputed attribution of approaches and/or theories to Plato. Rather, the focus is on whether the introduced approaches/theories/concepts *per se* are of relevant use to this thesis.³⁴

1.3.3 Formulating a Theoretical Framework

In light of the parameters derived from the literature review, which are supposed to extract, and combine the strengths of, the relevant elements from the approaches and/or theories surveyed, the hypothesis will be examined and re-worked into a revised hypothesis comprising a revised theory of *shiyi* supported by a number of fine-tuned arguments developed around a number of modified key terms. The revised hypothesis will then serve as a theoretical framework operationally adequate for use in poetry analysis.

1.3.4 Analysing Modern Chinese Poems

For evaluation of the validity and soundness of the proposed theory of *shiyi* underlying the revised hypothesis, a number of representative modern Chinese poems will be analysed systematically. Given that a substantial corpus of the sub-genre of

³⁴ And hence the heading of Section 2.3.B.2.5: *Drew A. Hyland's Plato* (instead of Plato).

new poetry has been built up over the past decades,³⁵ the selection of representative samples will be done by consulting and comparing numerous authoritative anthologies, collections and studies.³⁶ In particular, a number of famous and eminent poets from various decades representative of their respective schools will receive special attention in the research,³⁷ and the choice of them justified where appropriate.³⁸

On the other hand, it is neither within the scope nor the intention of the thesis to treat classical poetry exhaustively, so that classical poems will be discussed only as and when required, such as to demonstrate that the hypothesis is equally applicable to classical poetry, or Chinese poetry at large.³⁹ It should also be noted that this thesis is not directly comparing the *shiyi* of classical poetry, confined here to those composed from Tang dynasty (618-907) to late Qing, to that of new poetry composed since the May Fourth Movement, as it will not be entirely fair to compare a literary tradition of roughly 1,300 years to that of less than 100 years. The focus is rather on, for instance, how *shiyi* of a modern poem is affected by the actual use of a different vehicle of expression from that of a classical poem.

³⁵ As an extremely rough indication, Pan Songde 潘頌德 suggests that more than 1,300 anthologies of works by over 700 modern poets were covered in a rather comprehensive catalogue published in 1993 (2006, 1-2). Besides, according to a more recent catalogue, the figure of such anthologies, together with collected commentaries on Chinese new poetry, published during the period from Jan. 1920 to Jan. 2006 is 17,800 (Wang Ke 2012, "Introduction", 2)

³⁶ Such anthologies and collections in English translations, which have established their authority out of distinguished scholarly efforts, may include Acton and Ch'en 1936, Hsu 1964, Lin 1972, Fung and et al. 1974, and Xie and Hong 2009-10. Authoritative Chinese language sources, too numerous to mention here, will be referred to wherever required.

³⁷ The poets include Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978), Xu Zhimo 徐志摩 (1897-1931), Tian Han 田漢 (1898-1968), Wen Yiduo 聞一多 (1899-1946), Zhu Xiang 朱湘 (1904-1933), Dai Wangshu 戴望舒 (1905-1950), Bian Zhilin 卞之琳 (1910-2000), Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (1928-), Luo Fu 洛夫 (1928-), Zheng Chouyu 鄭愁予 (1933-) and Gu Cheng 顧城 (1956-1993), and the rationale for choosing them and/or their works will be provided in Chapter 4 as appropriate.

³⁸ However, there are unavoidably constraints in the selection of poems for analysis. For instance, despite literary or historical significance variously attributed to them, it is simply impractical, given the length of this thesis, for including some rather lengthy pieces, such as Guo Moruo's "Fenghuang niepan" 鳳凰涅槃 (The nirvana of the phoenix), of 394 lines excluding sub-headings of stanzas, in our chapter of analysis. See Xie and Jiang 2010, 293 for Guo's poem.

³⁹ For ease of reference, the original and translated versions of the classical poems discussed, as well as the new poems analysed in the thesis, are provided in **Appendix C**.

1.3.5 Drawing a Conclusion

Through theoretical deliberations and thorough study and analysis of the selected poems, a conclusion can be drawn on whether the revised hypothesis is valid and sound for identifying and accounting for the differences in *shiyi*. Besides, findings obtained in the analysis will be used to determine if it is justified to attribute the poorer reception to Chinese new poetry to the alleged unintelligibility problem. Findings concerned with weaknesses of the revised hypothesis will also be fed back as appropriate to further revise and strengthen the hypothesis.

1.4 STRUCTURE:

Chapter 1 introduces the background, the objectives, the methodology, the structure, the hypothesis, as well as the expected outcomes and value of the research. Chapter 2 contains a literature review of relevant traditions and/or schools of approaches from the philosophical, linguistic and literary perspectives, based on which the respective strengths and weaknesses of the approaches, as well as their applicability, will be evaluated, before Ricoeur's hermeneutics and other relevant approaches and/or theories are singled out as major candidates for incorporation into the hypothesis. Parameters will also be obtained for formulation of the revised hypothesis in the next chapter. In Chapter 3, a revised hypothesis is formulated through incorporating the parameters into the hypothesis, with the key terms and arguments revised or modified as appropriate. Chapter 4 includes a thorough and systematic analysis of a number of representative modern Chinese poems in their historical and literary contexts as necessary, for evaluation of the validity of the revised hypothesis. Chapter 5 summarises the findings and value, provides the conclusion, and reports the limitations of the research.

1.5 THE HYPOTHESIS:

In the following, some preliminary thoughts on the research problem will be outlined, which will then be followed by a hypothesis formulated based on a pragmatic approach (i.e. relevance theory) temporarily identified as a theoretical foundation with the rationale detailed below. It should be noted that the hypothesis is supposed to contribute to poetics, which, in addition to its use for descriptive (and

thus more objective) analysis of poetry, includes prescriptive (and thus more subjective) ideals for poetry.

1.5.A The Unintelligibility Problem of Modern Chinese Poetry

In order to solve the **research problem** of this thesis, namely the justifiability of attributing Chinese new poetry's poorer reception to the alleged unintelligibility problem, it is imperative to first identify the alleged problem of unintelligibility. Justifiably or not, modern Chinese poetry is widely recognised as being less positively received when compared to classical Chinese poetry. But it is another question to ask whether it is justified to form such reception based on the alleged unintelligibility problem, and hence the research problem of this thesis.

Except for those briefly mentioned earlier in this chapter, there exist in the literature copious studies primarily on Chinese poetry where contrastive reception to the two sub-genres can be found. Part of the literature on the comparative study of the sub-genres and on new poetry will be summarised below, so as to give an overview to the current situation of the contrasting reception, as well as the alleged unintelligibility problem of new poetry. Unintelligibility, in its literal sense or as a euphemism for unmeaningfulness (in both its senses of lacking in understandable meaning and lacking in *shiyi*), is customarily cited as the major weakness of the modern sub-genre, which can arguably be seen as the reason behind the poorer reputation enjoyed by new poetry in general. Most notably, for instance, Jin Kemu 金克木 has taken it as granted that discussion on new poetry should begin with *huise de wenti* 晦澀的問題 (the problem of unintelligibility), which he considers should be divided into the problems of understanding of the characters/lines [or language] and the meaning conveyed.⁴⁰ Besides, Michel Hockx uses “unintelligible” to refer to one of the widespread opinions on modern Chinese poetry “heard time and again” in mainland China.⁴¹ The situation is probably best summed up by Brian Phillips Skerratt's remark that “[o]bscurity[, or unintelligibility used in its literal sense in this thesis,] is not a new problem in Chinese poetry, but it is a central problem of the last hundred years, not to mention a constant barrier to the acceptance of New Poetry by

⁴⁰ See Jin Kemu 1937, 102-103. His analysis of the problem of unintelligibility/understanding, however, is preliminary discussion lacking in in-depth analysis.

⁴¹ See Hockx 2005, 261. Yet, it is not his intention to investigate further the problem of unintelligibility in his paper.

reader”.⁴² As such, how unintelligibility arises and the nature of this unintelligibility, such as its relationship with *shiyi* (if any), are considered the key to resolving the research problem.

If we turn to the history of modern poetry,⁴³ it is possible to see some hints as to how familiarity to the tradition was shaken soon after modern poetry came into being. According to Mary M.Y. Fung’s concise account, as paraphrased below, new poetry was ushered into China when Hu Shi, then a postgraduate student at Columbia University, started the Literary Revolution in 1917. Inspired by the Renaissance in Europe and the Romantic Movement in England, Hu championed vernacular literature composed in *baihua*. Together with poetic diction, traditional poetic forms were abandoned. In this uneasy vacuum, poets of new poetry, who were mostly returned from Britain and America and a lesser number from Japan, naturally looked to the West for literary models. Hu’s programme of reform, as well as his experiments in new poetry,⁴⁴ was imagistic in origin. However, the first prominent poet was Guo Moruo, then a member of the Creation Society, who dominated the scene with his prolific Whitmanesque poems, followed by his more subdued poetic drama in the vein of Goethe. Later, when Guo turned to Marxism in the mid-1920s,⁴⁵ Romantic poetry was carried on by the Crescent Moon School, of which Xu Zhimo and Wen Yiduo were seriously engaged in finding new forms and rhythms for new poetry. Therefore, from its earliest development, new poetry has been the battlefield across which western oriented movements swept through China in rapid succession.⁴⁶ Western influence did not stop then, of course, but due to the focus of this thesis, this topic will not be studied in further detail.⁴⁷

⁴² See Skerratt 2013, 54.

⁴³ A rather detailed account covering Chinese new poetry in the 20th century is offered in Huang Weizong and Wang Jinmin 1998, 1:243-265 and 2: 240-255. Other more recent book-sized accounts may include Wang Guangming 2003 and Zhang Xin 2009.

⁴⁴ For information, Hu Shi’s collection of modern Chinese poetry, *Experimental Verses* 嘗試集, the first significant collection of its kind, was published in 1919. (Lin 1972, vii.)

⁴⁵ Xiaoming Chen (2007, 1) provides the exact years, suggesting that Guo “declared his conversion to Communism in 1924 [before] joining the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] in August 1927”.

⁴⁶ This account is adapted from Fung 2006b, which presents a very concise historical account on the infancy (of the development) of new poetry on p. 12. Julia Lin (1972, vii) also remarks that during the period of extremely active experimentation by poets from 1917 to 1937, “[w]orks of certain Formalist poets echoed the Western Romantics, Keats and Shelley, while Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Mallarmé gave rise to the Chinese Symbolist school.”

⁴⁷ See K. C. Wong 1974, esp. xvi-xxvi and xxxii-xxxiv for a general description of western influence

On the other hand, as far as the literary tradition is concerned, its influence can well be detected in the earliest acclaimed attempts of new poetry. Wai-lim Yip, for instance, has identified a whole stanza of Guo Moruo's "Fenghuang niepan"⁴⁸ as coming from the free translation of Qu Yuan's 屈原 (340 B.C.-278/7 B.C.) famous "Tian Wen" 天問 (Questions to Heaven), which Yip considers an act under the influence of a traditional consciousness, and a testimony to the existence of influence by subconscious, hidden traditional aesthetic concepts and cultural thoughts in the literary works of Guo's contemporary literati (such as Hu Shi, Lu Xun, Xu Zhimo and Wen Yiduo) who had received a classical cultural education.⁴⁹ But understandably, traditional Chinese poetry is but one of the sources of new poetry, and there is always some finger pointing to its Western source. That explains why Pan Songde, among others, suggests rather sarcastically that new poetry simply originated and developed under the influence of western poetry.⁵⁰ As such, a contrast is made between the influence of the less familiar West and that of the more familiar East, where "**familiarity**", in the sense of "a state of being familiar to a work or any part thereof resulting from one's access to the tradition, or rather the traditional or existing knowledge base, to which the work or any part thereof refers", can be a possible starting point for deliberating on the differences between the two sub-genres, and by extension, addressing the unintelligibility problem.

As to the general reception to new poetry, Wang Guangming 王光明 observes that new poetry has yet to establish a relatively stable system of symbolism and an order pertaining to this genre, thus it has still failed to win the sympathy of literary historians in general (as revealed in the inferior assessment it has been given vis-à-vis other genres such as novels and prose in some comparison of literary achievements over the last century), and that the world of modern Chinese poetry has never been a place for monuments of success.⁵¹ In addition, whereas Lu Xun commented in 1936 that even the poetical works of the few most outstanding modern poets were merely

on modern Chinese poetry during the period of 1917-1949. See also Maghiel van Crevel 1996, 43, 36 and 22, for, *inter alia*, Baudelaire's influence, the significance of Mao Zedong's 1942 *Yan'an Talks* ("Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Arts") and the influence exerted through Chinese translation of foreign literature. N.B.: According to Bonnie S. McDougall (1980, 7), Mao's Yan'an speeches delivered in May 1942 were not published until October 1943.

⁴⁸ See n.38 above.

⁴⁹ Yip 2006, 252.

⁵⁰ See Pan 2002, "Introduction", 1.

⁵¹ See Wang Guangming 2005, 156.

uncommendable outputs of innovative experimentation, Mao Zedong even remarked in 1965 that the several decades of history of *baihua* poetry had never witnessed the emergence of any real poets.⁵² Yu Guangzhong, an eminent contemporary poet of new poetry, observed as well in 1980 that “since May Fourth, [...] we have seen many famous poets, but no greats, and that’s why critics frequently blame poets for ‘lack of achievement’ in new poetry”.⁵³ With three figures of such stature in their respective fields making rather adverse comments in different decades, the general reception to new poetry over the period concerned is not so hard to know.⁵⁴ Attention is again drawn to Wang Guangming’s so-called “a relatively stable system of symbolism”, which assigns significance to **familiarity** to a stable system in the establishment of a sub-genre that could have been more successful.

Unintelligibility, however, is sometimes regarded as a favourable attribute of poetry. *Huise* 晦澀 (unintelligibility) is, according to Zhang Junshan 張俊山, one of the hallmarks of modernist poetry in China, one that is strived for, and even aimed at, at the expense of losing the otherwise larger readership, simply because modernist poets and their followers think that it is one means by which to overstep limits set by, and hence to replace, their predecessors.⁵⁵ But his *huise*, considered a *positive* factor contributing to artistic value, is actually not treated as unintelligibility in this thesis; rather, it can be regarded as some constituent of our yet-to-be defined *shiyi*, which is capable of accounting for the artistic value of a poem in terms of, among others,

⁵² See Long 1999, 641. Mao’s comment appears in Mao 1965, 198.

⁵³ See Yu Guangzhong 2004, 202. A more recent view was given in 2006 by Qian Liquan 錢理群, who commented that “I’m almost totally ignorant of Chinese contemporary poetry, [as] honestly speaking, I’ve for 20 years not read or commented on contemporary poetry for the simple reason that it is unintelligible [*budong* 不懂] to me.” (cited in Wang Ke 2012, “Introduction”, 3).

⁵⁴ Similar views are too numerous for inclusion, e.g. Feng Xuefeng suggests that with too few masterpieces, new poetry was already not highly regarded, and, besides, many people casually published their writings as “poetry”, thus further damaging the reputation of new poetry (1951, 2-3). See also He Qifang’s 何其芳 similar lament and query on the absence of great poets and masterpieces of new poetry (1954, 52). Besides, Julia C. Lin comments that “[t]he new poetry, especially in its early days, was disappointing: when compared with the great legacy of the traditional poets, it appeared awkward, crude, and immature” (1972, 1).

⁵⁵ See Zhang Junshan 1988, 66. Zhang also suggests that, devoted to *neixiang* 內向 (internal) exploration of the human psychology as well as the irrational domain therein, modernist poetry is by nature comparatively unintelligible, or alien to ordinary readers (ibid.). This suggests that modernist poetry must be intelligible to a *particular* readership, which highlights the significance of a proper definition of reader to sorting out the problem of unintelligibility.

readership. Besides, Zhang has not detailed any assessment criteria of poetry, but a modernist poem can be assessed by our *shiyi*, which is supposed to be able to provide more concrete valuation of a poem.⁵⁶

From the above, it can be suggested that should new poetry have achieved much more artistically than it is generally perceived, then there exists a problem of “**unintelligibility**”, which calls for a renewed approach to interpretation as its solution as well as a solution to the unjustifiably poor reception to new poetry. On the other hand, if new poetry is in general justifiably received as has been claimed by those mentioned above, possibly due to a problem related to **familiarity** or a lack thereof, its artistic value is actually inferior to, say, its classical counterpart, and the unintelligibility problem concerned has no true solution from a reader’s perspective. This means that the **unintelligibility** problem can be considered in terms of **familiarity**.

In view of the above preliminary, general understanding on the research problem, it is proposed to formulate a hypothesis for furthering deliberation of the problem, with special emphasis on the relationship between unintelligibility and familiarity. As a preliminary model based on our current understanding on how the problem can best be tackled, the hypothesis is intended not as an end in itself but to suggest a way forward for further study.

1.5.B The Hypothesis — A Foundation for Further Study

The unintelligibility problem specified above can be examined from many angles (like from one of textual understanding or philology, giving attention primarily to the text). For the hypothesis, it is suggested to take up the perspective of a pragmatic approach, namely relevance theory, as introduced below.

1.5.B.1 Relevance Theory

Unlike an encoding/decoding model associated with semantics, relevance theory,

⁵⁶ It is suggested that “the label of ‘not intelligible, need not be intelligible’ attached to a poem may simply be used as an excuse for one’s inability to get the overall *shiyi* [undefined here] of the poem. After all, how can such a poem, which is ‘not intelligible’, be regarded as a good one? It is only reasonable to comment that it is not easy to explain and explicate in concrete terms the taste and the state of the poem, whose literal meaning must at least be understandable though.” (Chan 1987, 7-8.)

as developed by Sperber and Wilson in 1986⁵⁷ and 1995⁵⁸, is based on an inferential model where a communicator provides evidence of his⁵⁹ “intention to convey a certain meaning, which is [then] inferred by the audience on the basis of the evidence provided”.⁶⁰ The goal of inferential pragmatics is exactly to “explain how the hearer infers the speaker’s meaning on the basis of the evidence provided”,⁶¹ and hence its relevance to the unintelligibility problem considered in the thesis.

Sperber and Wilson expound the principle of **relevance**, according to which every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.⁶² They characterise relevance as “a property of inputs to cognitive processes which makes them worth processing”.⁶³ The authors’ contention on optimal relevance is evident because, unless the communicator is merely pretending to be communicating, it is in his interest to be understood, and hence his efforts in making the message to the addressee as easy to understand as possible. The communicator will thus choose the most relevant stimulus that will call for the least processing effort. Accordingly, a level of optimal relevance, which takes into account the interests of both communicating parties, is presumed to exist in communication.⁶⁴ “Relevance” is, in simple terms, “understood as a favourable balance of ‘positive cognitive effects’ over processing time and effort”, where “a positive cognitive effect is (roughly) an improvement in the hearer’s representation of the world, such as acquisition of a true and useful belief”.⁶⁵ In this way, relevance is

⁵⁷ This refers to the first edition of their *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* mentioned earlier.

⁵⁸ The newer edition incorporates a “Postface” outlining the development of relevance theory since its inception. Most importantly, the authors have in the Postface added one more principle of relevance and revised the presumption of optimal relevance. See He and Ran 2001, 24-25 and F28-29 for an introduction. See also Clark 2013, part II, for an overview of how the theory has been extended, applied and critically discussed, which is not considered to have serious implications on the presentation and application of the theory in this thesis.

⁵⁹ Throughout this thesis, except for cases where a specific individual is referred to in our analysis, “he” (as well as “his”, “him”, etc) is meant in a gender-neutral way that is equivalent to “he/she” (as well as “his/her”, “him/her”, etc), following the general practice of linguistic study.

⁶⁰ Wilson and Sperber 2004, 607. This book chapter provides a concise overview of relevance theory as at 2004.

⁶¹ Ibid., 607.

⁶² Sperber and Wilson 2001, 158.

⁶³ Wilson and Sperber 2002, 600-601.

⁶⁴ Sperber and Wilson 2001, 157-158.

⁶⁵ Lycan 2008, 166. N.B.: It is well established in literature of philosophy that to *believe* something

effectively linked to (improved) access to **truth/truthfulness**.⁶⁶ This is indeed in line with one prevailing way of theorising about truth from the philosophical perspective, which suggests that truth is a norm because “belief *in general* aims at truth”, and that we “believe truths when they are *relevant*, or interesting for a given task”.⁶⁷

For clarification and clarity, Sperber and Wilson later put forward two revised Principles of Relevance to replace the original one:

- “(1) Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance.
- (2) Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.”⁶⁸

As Sperber and Wilson elaborate, relevance is a property of inputs to cognitive processes, such as stimuli (or more generally external phenomena, which are inputs to perceptual processes) or assumptions (which are inputs to internal inferential processes).⁶⁹ By the First (or Cognitive) Principle, human cognitive resources tend to be allocated to the processing of the most relevant internal/external inputs available, and human cognition tends to be organised so as to maximise relevance.⁷⁰ That is

is to believe that it is *true*.

⁶⁶ In Wilson and Sperber 2002, the authors further explore the relationship between truthfulness and relevance, which is related to formulation of the definition of *shiyi* in this thesis. N.B.: Unlike other key terms that are to come in our discussion and be clearly defined, **truth** is, according to the philosophical position of minimalism, not constituted by some more fundamental property (Horwich 1998, 145), and will thus be used as a basic concept in our discussion of other key terms. This can be regarded as another principle of the **background theory** in this thesis. As for **truthfulness**, it is for the time being, and for Wilson and Sperber 2002, meant to represent the abstract noun of “truthful” (i.e. the adjective of “truth”).

⁶⁷ See Engel 2002, 128, italics in original, and *ibid.*, 8, where it is more plainly suggested that “our ordinary notion of truth involves the idea that it is a norm of enquiry”. This will open up our later discussion of *another* truthfulness which is different from the abstract noun of “truthful” mentioned in n.66.

⁶⁸ This is the revised version as found in the “Postface”, Sperber and Wilson 2001, 260.

⁶⁹ Sperber and Wilson 2001, 261.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 261 and 262. And on 261-262, the authors base their claim of maximisation of relevance to the assumption that cognition is a biological function and that cognitive mechanisms are in general adaptations that “have evolved in small incremental steps, mostly consisting in the selection of a

why the authors suggest that utterance raises expectations of relevance “because the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition, which communicators may exploit”.⁷¹ In light of that, relevance can be seen as a link between the two communicating parties to facilitate, or necessitate, effective communication.

As for the Second (or Communicative) Principle, it is a descriptive claim about the content of a given act of ostensive communication, which suggests that part of the content is a presumption that the act is relevant to the addressee.⁷² Accordingly, in interpreting an utterance, the aim of the addressee is to “identify the communicator’s informative intention”.⁷³ This intention, in this context, refers to the intention to be informative in communication, also regarded to be relevant to the addressee. In other words, the authors can be considered as suggesting that “to be informative in communication” is equivalent to “to be relevant to the addressee [being addressed in communication]”. It follows that relevance is about being relevant to (the aim of) communication in the first place. Besides, relevance is optimal because both communicating parties are assumed to be rational, so that the communicator’s intentions are constrained, and the addressee’s interpretation is guided, by this assumption.⁷⁴ On the part of a rational addressee, he will not expect more relevance than the communicator is willing and able to achieve.⁷⁵ For the communicator, he is limited by his own abilities of expression and his preferences and/or willingness to fully express.⁷⁶ However, in stating the importance of this rationality, relevance theory does not demonstrate how this can be realised. Their rationality, therefore, is practically unbounded without any qualifications specified in actual use. Under such circumstances, it is reasonable to suggest that this rationality hinges on, or is bounded by, something, such as a knowledge base, a concept which can be represented by **Chineseness** or **macro-context/micro-context** (to be introduced below), so that there

variant that performed better at the time than other variants that were around”, and thus they contend that “[c]eteris paribus, greater benefits or lower costs are always a good thing”. They further suggest, on 262, that “in general, an enduring biological mechanism with a stable function will have evolved towards a better cost-benefit balance, i.e. towards greater efficiency”.

⁷¹ Wilson and Sperber 2004, 608.

⁷² Sperber and Wilson 2001, 271. N.B. The two principles (rather than relevance theory as a whole) can thus be regarded as forming the **background theory** of relevance theory, and by extension, of the hypothesis.

⁷³ Ibid. N.B.: And it is in this way that relevance theory is considered a speaker-centred approach.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ See Wilson and Sperber 2002, 602.

is a scope within which expectation for relevance is deemed rational. From another perspective, it can be argued that effective communication is actually possible provided that there is a reader endowed with such a knowledge base, represented by a **general reader**⁷⁷ explicated below, who possesses such a bounded rationality.⁷⁸

The optimal relevance as upheld in relevance theory is considered highly relevant to the posited criterion of *shiyi*, supposedly the focus of poetry appreciation. It is assumed that reading of a (good) poem should provide its reader with a (high) level of *shiyi*. This assumption is considered to agree with the presumption of optimal relevance: every act of ostensive communication [via a poem] communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance [to the aim of communication, and in case of a poem, the derivation of *shiyi*]. This account is significant to the thesis, especially to the proposed definition of ***shiyi***, according to which a possible correspondence between *shiyi* and cognitive effect (and/or acquisition of truth/true belief or truthfulness) can be established.⁷⁹ As far as a case of verbal communication is concerned, relevance can be regarded as being relevant to

⁷⁷ The author concerned *can be* considered a general reader as he reads his own works, and it is thanks to his general reader status that he should understand what *the* general reader would like to derive from reading the works. To be exact, the general reader is a collective noun as it is used in this thesis.

⁷⁸ As early as in 1955, Herbert A. Simon (1955, 99) suggested that “rational behaviour should be compatible with the access of information and the computational capacities that are actually possessed by organisms [...]”. This effectively stimulated the development and proliferation of the concept of “**bounded rationality**”, on which Simon further elaborated that “[w]ithin the behavioral model of bounded rationality, one doesn’t have to make choices that are infinitely deep in time, that encompass the whole range of human values, and in which each problem is interconnected with all the other problems in the world” (1983, Kindle Locations 172-173). See also Selten 2001, 14 where the author explains that “[f]ull rationality requires unlimited cognitive capabilities[, yet h]uman beings['] cognitive capabilities are quite limited”.

⁷⁹ Wilson and Sperber specifically point out that “[a] *positive* [emphasis mine] cognitive effect is a genuine improvement in knowledge. When false information is mistakenly accepted as true, this is a cognitive effect, but not a positive one: it does not contribute to relevance (though it may seem to the individual to do so)” (2002, 602, n.4). Such elaboration, however, further reinforces the attachment of their relevance to truthfulness, even if there is actually no means by which the reader (say owing to his knowledge base, intelligence, intellectual inclinations, etc.) who has mistaken false information as true can distinguish his perceived cognitive effect from positive cognitive effect. This deduction from their elaboration is nevertheless unsatisfactory, as there is no solid rationale to reject cognitive effect that is deprived of truthfulness (known only to the relevance-theorists in this case) should such effect be actually perceived and result in change in the knowledge of the hearer.

(fulfilment of) the aim of communication. However, relevance theory does *not* state explicitly whether this relevance should be directed to something else or in addition if it is literature that is the focus of attention, though it is implied that generally relevance may be directed to **truthfulness** or **knowledge**.⁸⁰ This suggests that as an approach for literature analysis, relevance theory may be inadequate by itself, which warrants support from other theories.

It is noteworthy that Sperber and Wilson touched on literature and mentioned “poetic effect” in their book, considering it to be the result of implicature, an indirect way of expression (not necessarily only in literature) made with a view to achieving some additional contextual effects (i.e. cognitive effects), which are able to offset the additional effort needed to process such indirect expression.⁸¹ Although not coming close to a theory of poetic effect, and not exactly the *shiyi* in which we are interested, their poetic effect is specified as “the peculiar effect of an utterance which achieves most of its relevance through a wide array of weak implicatures”, suggesting that “the most striking examples of a particular figure, the ones singled out for attention by rhetoricians and students of style, are those which have poetic effects in this sense”.⁸² Thus, it is likely that the peculiar effect in their mind is related to some kind of rhetorical and/or stylistic effect, a possible and potential source of our *shiyi*. Given that “[t]he weaker the implicatures, the less confidence the hearer can have that the particular premises or conclusions he supplies will reflect the speaker’s thoughts, and this is where the indeterminacy lies”,⁸³ their poetic effect is also related to such indeterminacy facing a reader. Strangely enough, they further suggest that poetic effects “do not add entirely new assumptions”, but “marginally increase the manifestness of a great many weakly manifest assumptions”.⁸⁴ Put in another way,

⁸⁰ It should be noted that Wilson and Sperber remark that “‘Relevance’ is used in a technical sense which is not meant to capture any of the ordinary senses of the word” (2002, 601), probably intending to make their relevance a more scientific jargon term with their specified meaning, though actually it is the common sense of the word (which states the relevance between two things) that is considered to be of vital importance to their theory. For instance, they argue that it is not truthfulness, but their relevance, which should be given the status of a maxim, yet in their elaboration, they have to refer to truthfulness or knowledge as the final destination of a reader’s pursuit in interpretation (ibid., 598 and 599), and hence the insufficiency of their relevance as a self-sustained concept.

⁸¹ See Sperber and Wilson 2001, 196-197.

⁸² Ibid., 222.

⁸³ Ibid., 200.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 224.

poetic effects “create common impressions rather than common knowledge”.⁸⁵ As such, it seems their poetic effect is that special kind of cognitive effect obtainable when a reader is faced with indeterminacy, having been suggested a great many weakly manifest assumptions by the text.⁸⁶ This also leads us to believe that their poetic effect is more concerned with the “less definite” truthfulness than the “definite” truth, to be discussed shortly. However, the exact relationship between their poetic effect and indeterminacy (or cognitive/contextual effect) has not been clearly explicated.⁸⁷ Besides, indeterminacy seems to be a negative attribute rather than a positive one with which *shiyi* is considered to be associated. Hence, a better-defined new concept of **subtlety**, which is not used in its literal sense in this thesis, will be introduced later in this section to substitute their indeterminacy.

In addition, it is also unclear as to how a reader should expend his processing effort during the interpretation process, though the authors suggest that the reader has to rely on “an effort of imagination”, on which they have not elaborated, to “bring together relatively unrelated encyclopaedic entries and construct non-stereotypical assumptions” in order to make a better sense of the text given the principle of relevance.⁸⁸ Perhaps how their “imagination” (or something otherwise named⁸⁹) can

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Liu Liqiong 劉莉瓊 (2005, 50) does relate “poetic effect” (in the sense as suggested in Sperber and Wilson 2001), her “詩性效果”, to literature, arguing that the essence of literature lies exactly in the richness and complexity of poetic effect, though she does not explain further the relationship between poetic effect and literature, except for highlighting the significance of ambiguity, vagueness and indeterminacy resulting from poetic effect as possessed by literary language. It should be noted, therefore, that “poetic effect” *per se* is a vague term difficult to clearly define, which will be further discussed shortly.

⁸⁷ Nor does Wilson and Sperber 2002 provide any clear account for this, except on 607 where the authors reiterate that the type of cognitive effect they are concerned with is improvements in knowledge, and, even more vaguely and indirectly, on 617 where they remark that “poetic metaphors have a wide range of potential implicatures, and the audience is encouraged to be *creative* [emphasis mine] in exploring this range”. This, however, merely suggests a difference between cognitive effect and poetic effect. Besides, in applying relevance theory, Adrian Pilkington tries to define poetic effect [or his “poetic effects”], but only in a rather complex and scattered manner (in Pilkington 2000, 47, 131 and 141, to be discussed in Sub-section 2.3.E.1), and his attempt does not contribute much to clarifying the relationship between cognitive effect and the poetic effect as construed by relevance theorists.

⁸⁸ Sperber and Wilson 2001, 223.

⁸⁹ It is not clear if such imagination is similar, equivalent or related to creativity as encouraged to apply by the audience in exploring the wide range of implicatures produced by poetic metaphors as referred

be used in interpretation should and could be better accounted for in the hypothesis.

Now come back to the case of verbal communication, where the speaker “must make some assumptions about the hearer’s cognitive abilities and contextual resources”.⁹⁰ Aiming at optimal relevance, a speaker presumably “will leave implicit everything [his/]her hearer can be trusted to supply with less effort than would be needed to process an explicit prompt”.⁹¹ As such, the more information is left implicit, the greater the degree of mutual understanding is taken to exist between the two communicating parties. And if the degree of mutual understanding is overestimated, or there is a mismatch between the speaker’s estimate and the hearer’s abilities, there comes the risk of making the speaker’s utterance harder or even impossible to understand.⁹² This, in particular, is highly relevant to the interpretation problem investigated in this thesis, especially to “**unintelligibility**” as observed in some modern poems, given that mutual understanding seems less likely to establish effectively in case of written texts (which bear witness to a distance and a time span between the author and the reader). Accordingly, relevance theory, again, has to be adjusted or modified if it is to better fit for the purposes of this thesis centred on written poetical works.

1.5.B.2 Types of Interpretation and Unintelligibility

From the above, it is clear that interpretation cannot be taken as a unified enterprise. It is thus helpful to refer to Anders Pettersson’s analysis of interpretation, where he highlights “a tripartite distinction between [different] kinds of interpretation” that differentiates a verbal understanding of a text, the appreciation of the work, and scholarly or critical investigations of the work.⁹³ Pettersson also stresses the significance and difficulty in finding an approach that can accommodate all these kinds of interpretation.⁹⁴ Attempting to accommodate, or rather reconcile, these different kinds of interpretation, it is suggested here that as far as poetry is concerned, interpretation can fundamentally be divided into two related levels, including the first-level (lower-level) interpretation (equivalent to Pettersson’s verbal understanding of a text) and the second-level (higher-level) interpretation (equivalent

to in n.87 above.

⁹⁰ Sperber and Wilson 2001, 218.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ See Pettersson 2003, 6.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 7.

to Pettersson's appreciation of the work and scholarly or critical investigations of the work), which can be dealt with by a theory based on a single criterion of *shiyi*. The simpler division of interpretation advocated here is due to the understanding that interpretation can be roughly distinguished into a process of searching for literal meaning plus another process of searching for deeper meaning. Bearing in mind that no absolute demarcation can be drawn between the two processes, the simpler division still accords with relevance theory, which upholds the inferential model but doesn't disallow the encoding/decoding model.⁹⁵ This division, in addition, well accommodates the concept of optimal relevance, according to which it is supposedly possible to identify a definite end to efforts expended to appreciation of the work and scholarly/critical investigations of the work.

As suggested above, Jin Kemu has identified two types of "unintelligibility":⁹⁶ the first type refers to unintelligibility of the language used in the lines of a poem (hereinafter referred to as unintelligibility of language); and the second type refers to unintelligibility of the meaning behind the lines of the poem (hereinafter referred to as unintelligibility of meaning, which is to persist unless hints such as footnotes are provided). His classification is put forward for discussion purposes in his essay, though without involving it for explaining the meaning of a poem in terms of some concept like poeticalness (or the undefined or ill-defined *shiyi* casually used throughout the modern scholarly literature) or our *shiyi*. Besides, there is the suspicion that those pieces of writing which do not have any intelligible (not to mention poetical) meaning should not have been assigned with the status of poem in the first place. Hence, Jin's two types of unintelligibility are not theoretically adequate for use in this thesis.

In light of Pettersson's simpler division of interpretation as well as Jin's two types of "unintelligibility" suggested above, however, it is conceived that the problem of unintelligibility in modern Chinese poetry can be better clarified by differentiating

⁹⁵ For instance, Wilson and Sperber remark that "the linguistic meaning recovered by decoding is just one of the inputs to an inferential process which yields an interpretation of the speaker's meaning" (2002, 600). Besides, their emphasis on the dual combination of explicatures and implicatures, such as on 622, also reinforces a two-layer paradigm in analysis of meaning. This paradigm can be traced to the 2nd century, when Philo Judaeus's (20 B.C. – 50 A.D.) influential thought that "while interpreters are to look for a spiritual sense in the text, they must find a basis for this spiritual sense in the literal sense that the text bears" was developed into two conflicting schools emphasising respectively on the spiritual sense and the literal sense (Crotty 1998, 89-90).

⁹⁶ See n.40.

between two other types of unintelligibility, both related to failure in deriving *shiyi* from reading of a poem. The first type refers to unintelligibility arising from unmeaningfulness of the poem (i.e. **Type A unintelligibility**), which effectively covers Jin's unintelligibility of language, and the other type refers to unintelligibility arising from insufficient efforts expended in interpretation of the poem (i.e. **Type B unintelligibility**), which effectively covers Jin's unintelligibility of meaning.⁹⁷ Apparently, Type A unintelligibility is attributed to failure in the "poem" concerned, which is a piece of unmeaningful writing deficient in *shiyi*, and hence a non-poem (where "meaningfulness", or "literal meaningfulness" to tally with the first-level (lower-level) interpretation in the suggested division, is assumed to be the basis of *shiyi*), while Type B unintelligibility can be attributed to the reader, who, owing to his lack of sufficient investment of efforts, fails in his appreciation and scholarly and/or critical investigations to derive *shiyi* out of meaningfulness from the poem, and/or the poet, who in the first place fails to convey *shiyi* out of meaningfulness in an intelligible manner. Of particular interest to this thesis are the distinction between the two types of unintelligibility and the nature of Type B unintelligibility. For the distinction, it is one between an "unmeaningful poem" and a "difficult-to-interpret yet meaningful poem", and can be manifested by investing sufficient efforts in the interpretation process to see if the particular poem at last makes sense. Accordingly, after prolonged and extra efforts have been spent in making sense of the poem, it will be considered justified to conclude whether the poem is actually too difficult to interpret, yet still meaningful, or simply unmeaningful. As for the nature of Type B unintelligibility, the interplay between the reader and the poet (through his poem) is to be sorted out before it can be fairly concluded as to whose responsibility it is that the unintelligibility problem occurs. In poetry analysis, it is presumed that identification of Type B unintelligibility precedes that of Type A unintelligibility. This is just logically straightforward as we are doing *poetry* analysis, and the term *poetry* presumes the endowment of the quality defined here as *shiyi* in the poem concerned. It is only after expending sufficient efforts can we conclude that there is no Type B unintelligibility involved in a particular "poem" (in fact no longer a poem according to the hypothesis). Of course, such a "poem" (a status equivalent to that of a non-poem) is, by definition, deficient in *shiyi*. There is, however, a **missing link** between meaningfulness and *shiyi* that has to be accounted for in the hypothesis.

⁹⁷ According to Nicholas Rescher, there are two modes of personal ignorance, namely culpable ignorance and inevitable ignorance, and the former exists when one should know something but doesn't, while the latter exists when there is just no possible way of knowing something. (2009, 6.) Accordingly, Type A unintelligibility and Type B unintelligibility fall respectively into inevitable ignorance and culpable ignorance as characterised by Rescher.

1.5.B.3 *Shiyi*

Before putting forward the hypothesis, it is necessary to clarify our current position on *shiyi*. *Shiyi*, a general, common term used for assessing and/or describing the attractiveness of a poem, is regarded as the quality in a poem that makes it poetic. However, *shiyi* is, as stated earlier, a vague, abstract concept.⁹⁸ A parallel can probably be drawn between *shiyi* and what James Liu refers to as concepts of literature and art.⁹⁹ As such, if *shiyi* is to be adopted as a criterion for assessment of poetry, we have to identify or devise a method to properly define it. A study on *mei* 美 (beauty) by Chen Liangyun 陳良運 represents a way forward, or a possible method, in the study of such abstract concepts. In that comprehensive study, Chen traces in the tradition different versions, as well as various related concepts, of *mei*, finally arriving at his own definition convincingly.¹⁰⁰ This illustrates that over the long tradition, many scholars might have, from different perspectives or with different emphasis, already variously explained some abstract concept, but that *same* concept they were trying to illuminate remains vaguely defined.¹⁰¹ This in a way

⁹⁸ It is arguably comparable to abstract concepts such as *ren* 仁 and *li* 禮 in Chinese philosophy, which have been variously defined by different philosophers, even though their use especially in common language does not usually arouse confusion. A concise exposition on some possible scopes of meanings of *ren* and *li* can be found in Shun 2002. Other similarly abstract concepts may include love, beauty, etc. Roger Scruton has aptly summed up the difficulty in pinning down such abstract concepts by observing that “[d]elight is more important than the terms used to express it, and the terms themselves are in a certain measure anchorless, used more to suggest an effect than to pinpoint the qualities that give rise to it.” (2009, 15.)

⁹⁹ After commenting that it is unlikely that a definition can be arrived at for literature, James Liu suggests that “just as all literature and art are attempts to express the inexpressible, so all theories of literature and art are attempts to explain the inexplicable” (1975, 2-3). For comparison, in a book-chapter study of the actual meaning of the economic term “utility”, it is commented for illustration purposes that “[e]verybody knows what ‘good’ means, though not many of us can define it” (Broome 1999, 21).

¹⁰⁰ Chen Liangyun 2005, 7-29. Another earlier example par excellence is Wang Nian En 1992, a comprehensive historical investigation of the term *xing* 興 in traditional Chinese poetics.

¹⁰¹ Yu Guangzhong, for instance, mentions only once in his “Xinshi yu chuantong” 新詩與傳統 [New poetry and the tradition] his criterion of assessment, his *yijing* 意境, without defining it (1959, 133).

reminds us of the story of “the blind men who were asked to describe an elephant”,¹⁰² which calls for a multifaceted, or holistic, view of the same phenomenon. Similarly, it is also reasonable to suggest that many scholars before us were concerned about the essence of poetry, and thus painstakingly researched it by whatever name they referred differently to, but we can extend and promote that pursuit by streamlining all related studies under a particular name, such as *shiyi*.¹⁰³ By the same token, the same method can be applied to other key terms in the hypothesis in the literature review, where the focus is on the possible convergence of various (re)formulations of concepts represented by the key terms in the writings of particular authors, whether the exact key terms are directly expressed in their writings or not. This method, which is not particularly rare in scholarly efforts since the May Fourth Movement,¹⁰⁴ is to be used with due care and with special regard to all differences in perspectives and emphasis involved in earlier studies on “*shiyi*” and other key terms (or their incarnations), as well as their related concepts. Besides, similar to selection of

¹⁰² One famous Buddhist version of the story appears in *The Udana*, in the Pali Canon. See Bhikkhu 2012, Section 6:4, 95-97 for an English translation.

¹⁰³ Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 can be regarded as a relevant example here. According to Cui Haifeng 崔海峰 (2006, 409-411), Wang has never actually used *yijing* 意境 in his works of poetics, but his poetics, which literally focuses more on *jing* 境 or *jingjie* 境界, is actually very much concerned with *yijing*; his use of *jingjie* is regarded as an amalgamation of earlier philosophical concepts such as *xianliang* 現量 (roughly “intuition”), *yuanwu* 緣物 (roughly “arising from the external world”) and *ganwu* 感物 (roughly “touched by the external world”). And Martin Heidegger has probably adopted a similar methodology in his research where his main concern, the question of being, is addressed through investigating how that question has been answered variously in the history of philosophy. See an account of Heidegger’s enquiry in Ross 2007, 62-63.

¹⁰⁴ A case in point is the study of history of Chinese philosophy: it is well known that Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 had to first identify in the literature concepts and materials of relevance to “philosophy” (*zhexue* 哲學, a new concept then) in writing his famous *Zhongguo zhexue shi* 中國哲學史 [History of Chinese Philosophy] (1931 and 1934, in 2 vols.). See Feng Youlan 2000, 1: 3 for his method, and Cai Zhongde 2000, 442 for the years of publication. For Chinese literature, Wang Guowei 王國維 would see his own exploration of *jingjie* 境界 in *Renjian cihua* 人間詞話 (Ci-poetry talks in the man’s world) as capturing the whole picture of essence of poetry when compared to earlier, fragmented efforts on poetic concepts including *qizhi* 氣質 [temperament], *shenyun* 神韻 [spirit and charm], etc. (Xiao Huarong 2005, 375.) And a similar approach is seen adopted by Ming Dong Gu in his study of suggestiveness, as will be discussed in Section 2.3.B.1.2.7. Of course, the study of Chinese “literature” can be regarded as another example, as illustrated by, say, the method adopted in Luo Li-zong 2010, which endeavours to generalise the ideal definition of *wenxue* 文學 (literature) from various earlier attempts identified in both the Chinese and Western traditions (p. 51).

poems for analysis, identification of *shiyi*, other key terms and their related concepts is also subject to a degree of subjectivity, time constraints and the limited scope of this thesis.

1.5.B.4 The Hypothesis

In view of the foregoing discussion, the following adjustments are proposed to relevance theory with a view to adapting it for the purposes of this thesis:

(1) A clear correspondence is suggested to exist between *shiyi* and cognitive effect (and/or acquisition of truth/true belief or truthfulness), which can appropriately account for the inherent indeterminacy in weak implicatures, so that the proposed theory of *shiyi* should and could reflect and duly incorporate this correspondence;

(2) Subtlety, which duly incorporates indeterminacy and highlights and acknowledges the positive influence of the author on the poem composed, is suggested to be the missing link between meaningfulness and *shiyi*;

(3) Following a shift of focus from “relevance” as in relevance theory (considered an intermediary rather than a final destination of a reader’s pursuit) to “what relevance is directed to”, relevance is suggested to be directed towards *shiyi* as far as interpretation of poetry is concerned, which agrees with the suggestion that *shiyi* is supposed to be what a reader of poetry is looking for in poetry;

(4) “An effort of imagination”, which the relevance theorists rely on to “bring together relatively unrelated encyclopaedic entries and construct non-stereotypical assumptions” in order to make a better sense of the text given the principle of relevance, is suggested to be an informed decisiveness, or a bounded rationality, of the general reader (a collective term for all general readers). Such decisiveness arises from the general reader’s literary-cultural knowledge,¹⁰⁵ posited as the micro-context, working on what is in the text with reference to, primarily, the micro-context itself, and secondarily, a literary-cultural knowledge in the Chinese community concerned,

¹⁰⁵ The “cultural” doesn’t directly derive from, say, what Roger Scruton (2005, 150) refers to as “common culture” (which is something that “cannot be divorced from the social and political postures which define the life of the community”) or “high culture” (which is “a culture of Enlightenment” that “invokes an historical community of sentiment, while celebrating universal human values”), each of which has a deep political orientation. Rather, it should be seen in terms of Chineseness yet to be clearly defined.

posited as the macro-context, rather than the so-called encyclopaedic entries which are far too unbounded as far as poetry interpretation is concerned given the principle of relevance; and

(5) The two types of unintelligibility are suggested to be included in the hypothesis to supplement relevance theory.

Accordingly, the hypothesis advanced in the following is composed of a preliminary theory of *shiyi* (the purported single criterion for poetry assessment), as well as its underlying arguments comprising the main argument for a proposed “subtlety-unintelligibility” continuum (where subtlety is posited as the missing link, to be explicated below) and a number of supplementary arguments incorporating necessary adjustments made to relevance theory. Preliminary definitions of key terms in the arguments will also be given below where appropriate for further refinement in due course in later chapters.

According to the hypothesis, *shiyi* is defined here as “a kind of worthwhile cognitive effect associated with subtlety [or “positive indeterminacy”, to duly recognise the important input of the poet], resulting from reading of poetry, and the stronger the cognitive effect felt, the higher the level of *shiyi*, and the more poetic the poem concerned is considered”. Such worthwhile cognitive effect is, for the time being, yet to be trenchantly defined, but it is comparable to, though distinct from, literariness in literature:¹⁰⁶ comparable in that both are regarded as some essential element in a piece of literary writing; and distinct in that, as compared to *shiyi* which is considered more central in poetry reading and more broad-based in origin, literariness is according to the tradition starting from Russian formalism considered more of a result of defamiliarisation.¹⁰⁷ Still, generally speaking, where a functional

¹⁰⁶ According to David S. Miall and Don Kuiken (1999, 121 and 123), literariness is “constituted when stylistic or narrative variations strikingly defamiliarize conventionally understood referents and prompt reinterpretive transformations of a conventional concept or feeling”. Their model, however, is considered narrow-based and over-simplistic as it attaches too much significance to defamiliarisation, and hence it cannot attain theoretical virtues such as “compatibility with the data”, “explanatory power” and “fruitfulness” as mentioned in n.24. On the other hand, their remark that “[t]he strikingness of literature occurs against a background of familiarity and habituation” (ibid., 127) would, in our opinion, better capture the essence of their literariness. Another relevant model offered in Pilkington 2000, the one referred to in n.87 above, is also deemed theoretically inadequate. Details of the arguments for and against the two models can be found in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁷ Besides, for reference and/or comparison, “the processes embodied by foregrounding and

definition is adopted,¹⁰⁸ literariness can be taken as the effect that reading literature produces in the reader,¹⁰⁹ and *shiyi* can be taken as the effect that reading poetry produces in the reader.¹¹⁰

Accordingly, based on the simplistic definition of *shiyi* proposed above serving as the crux of the proposed hypothesis¹¹¹ and the analysis of the unintelligibility problem, six inter-related supporting arguments (**A1** to **A6**) as tentatively listed below (with the key terms in **bold**) will be put forward for further scrutiny in the thesis.¹¹²

defamiliarization have been central to literary theorists from the time of the Romantic theorists, such as Coleridge and Shelley” (Miall and Kuiken 1999, 127). It is interesting to note that on p. 124, they suggest that “[a]t the narrative level, we can also refer to the work of Zholkovsky (1984), who has shown how entire themes can be transformed through contrast, augmentation, reduction, and other ‘expressive devices’ to create a text’s ‘poetic world’” (an important notion to be dealt with in this thesis), for which they have failed to account though.

¹⁰⁸ According to Stephen Davies (1990, 99-100), the two most important ways of approaching the matter of definition of art are functionalism and proceduralism: the functionalist holds that “there is some distinctive need met by art in our lives and that it is in terms of this need that art is to be defined”; and the proceduralist holds that “it is a necessary condition for a thing’s being an artwork that it be ‘baptized’ as art by someone with the authority thereby to confer art status upon the piece”. When we talk about the functional definition of *shiyi* here, however, it refers to how the need is met by poetry functionally, by means of our *shiyi*, or Davies’s so-called distinctive experience (“aesthetic experience”), which may not be valued for the enjoyment to which it is said to give rise (as he asserts in *ibid.*, 99 due to his recognition of the primary value of art as hedonic, rather than moral or pragmatic). By contrast, the function of poetry as purported in this thesis will be detailed in Chapters 2 and 3. As for proceduralism, its adoption is not considered to be conducive to attainment of the theoretical virtue of “compatibility with background theory” (re. n.24), as *shiyi* will, according to proceduralism, be determined by the authority (usually comprising only a tiny faction of the readership) without necessarily having regard to what is in the poem.

¹⁰⁹ As Zhang Longxi explains, literariness is the basic characteristic that defines literary language from other languages, and something which makes a piece of writing literature. (2008, 46.)

¹¹⁰ Accordingly, literariness and *shiyi* can be considered to be equivalent in status in their respective relationship with literature and poetry.

¹¹¹ This is so proposed despite, or rather in response to, the phenomenon as suggested by Cristina Vischer Bruns that “[...] the critical approaches dominant in [Western] academic literary study in recent decades seem to have little connection to the value many [actually] experience in reading literary texts” (Bruns 2011, 7).

¹¹² Conceptualisation of these arguments, now temporarily arrived at by means of **prejudice** as conceived by Gadamer (in 2004, 273, where it is suggested that prejudice means “a judgment that is

(A1) The Common Cultural-literary Macro-context Argument: It is argued that as far as cultural-literary elements are concerned, the classical Chinese poetry tradition has given rise to a common “cultural-literary **macro-context**” (which is part of a common Macro-context defined as a knowledge base comprising all kinds of available knowledge) from which an individual reader may, consciously or not, extract those relevant and related constituents and assimilate them into a cognitive “cultural-literary **micro-context**” (which is part of the individual reader’s cognitive Micro-context,¹¹³ defined as a cognitive state of the individual reader, comprising all kinds of knowledge available to him) well before the commencement of reading of a classical poem new to the individual reader for its subsequent, effective interpretation through a “double-contextualisation” mechanism (comprising **internal contextualisation** and **external contextualisation**)[to be defined later];

(A2) The Subtlety-unintelligibility Continuum Argument [the main argument]: It is argued that a writer of classical poetry would be, in most cases, inclined to compose in a way taking full advantage of all possible nuances through manoeuvring the cultural-literary macro-context, with a view to creating a sense of “**subtlety**” out of **familiarity**, thus contributing to *shiyi*.¹¹⁴ In stark contrast,

rendered before all the elements that determine a situation have been finally examined”), will be detailed in Chapter 3, where definitions of terms used specifically in this thesis will further be specified. N.B.: Gadamer’s prejudice is explained in clarity as “[a] condition of making reflective and evaluative judgements about *the world*” (emphasis mine) in Lawn and Keane 2011, 115.

¹¹³ This Micro-context is coined to differentiate it from Macro-context. A Micro-context is equivalent to the context which, according to Adrian Pilkington’s simple explanation, “can only play a role in utterance interpretation as mentally represented contextual assumptions with logical form”, and, accordingly, physical context is “only significant insofar as it is possible to mentally represent states of affairs taken from the [physical] context, which may then play a role in inferencing” (2000, 61).

¹¹⁴ *Shiyi* appears in this argument, which is supposed to underlie the proposed theory of *shiyi*. This should not be regarded as a weakness of **circularity**, as *shiyi* is abstract and vague, and must be incorporated in this way into the proposed theory so that a deeper understanding of the term can be achieved through the process of a hermeneutic circle, as detailed in Section 2.3.D. Moreover, as Duncan Pritchard argues, “[...] that doesn’t mean that we should thereby abandon the analytic project altogether, since even circular analyses can be informative – just as non-circular analyses can sometimes be trivial – and it could also be helpful to know what the core necessary conditions of knowledge are.” (2009, 5). While Pritchard’s project is about knowledge, and that of this thesis is *shiyi*, methodologically the two projects share a similarity in that the object of inquiry is equally elusive

most writers of modern poetry have neglected or ignored the significance of (use of) the macro-context so as to render their compositions verging more on the side of Type A/B **unintelligibility** [as defined earlier]. Accordingly, a subtlety-unintelligibility continuum can be drawn for all poems where a particular poem can be located nearer to either end with regard to its perceived subtlety/unintelligibility as the case may be;

(A3) The Prosody Benefit Argument: It is argued that, given the supportive role of **prosodic devices** in the derivation of *shiyi*,¹¹⁵ the better equipped a modern, or classical, poet is with a full range of such devices, the better equipped he is to compose works with more *shiyi*,¹¹⁶

(A4) The Implied “General Reader” Argument: It is argued that cognitive Micro-contexts of individual readers should share among them a lot of similar constituents, or these cognitive Micro-contexts have overlapping areas, so as to be able to qualify as different manifestations of the common Micro-context of the implied “general reader” (and that, accordingly, cognitive cultural-literary micro-contexts of individual readers should also share among them a lot of similar constituents, or these cultural-literary micro-contexts have overlapping

to define and its analysis difficult to be reductive to terms that don’t make essential use of the concept of the object itself. The analysis of *shiyi* is thus fundamentally hermeneutically circular, and virtuously circular, in nature.

¹¹⁵ Traditionally, prosody refers to the study of the elements of language, especially metre, that contribute to rhythmic and acoustic effects in poetry. Thus, **prosodic devices** should include, and is defined in this thesis as, all those designs in a poem, such as alliteration, repetition (in words/characters and/or in form) and the like, which aim to promote its melodic effects. However, as Damron (2004, 53) has pointed out, “[r]ecent work in prosody has continued to expand [...] by taking into consideration such aspects of interaction as how prosody can signal speakers’ intentions in the discourse”. This provides a more solid basis for incorporating melodic effects into the derivation of *shiyi*, which will be outlined shortly.

¹¹⁶ It is almost a common belief that for a good poem its melodic effect and its meaning should reinforce each other, but actually it is always suggested that some melodic unit is expressing something meaningful, or that some meaning is expressed by/in the melodic units, and not the other way round (which is when some meaningful unit is expressing some kind of melodic effect, or some melodic effect is expressed by/in the meaningful unit). So in effect it is the melodic effect that is supporting or reinforcing the meaning, and not the other way round. And this explains why melodic effects or devices should be accorded with only secondary importance when compared to meaningful units in the analysis of a poem.

areas, so as to be able to qualify as different manifestations of the common cultural-literary micro-context of the implied “general reader”);

(A5) The Significance of Chineseness Argument: It is argued that a language is primarily a carrier of the characteristics of the culture of people speaking in that language, and in the case of Chinese, a carrier of “**Chineseness**”,¹¹⁷ and hence the indispensability, and significance, of “Chineseness” to Chinese literature/poetry; and

(A6) The Paradox of Vernacular Benefit Argument: It is argued that while the May Fourth popular vernacular-centred idea¹¹⁸ of “*wo shou xie wo kou*” 我手寫我口¹¹⁹ (writing [exactly] as one speaks¹²⁰) may be conducive to relieving a writer of many restrictions on writing through the **vernacular benefit**,¹²¹ this idea in practice may actually create an opaque barrier between a poet and his

¹¹⁷ Accordingly, **Chineseness** is defined as “the characteristics of the culture of a community of Chinese-speaking people”. Thus, for a reader, say, who is a bilingual in Chinese and English, Chineseness and Englishness are two of the constituents of his cognitive Micro-context. As for an Englishman who, say, is well versed in Shakespeare’s works and quite ignorant of Chinese, he may still find it interesting to read a translation of a Chinese poem or simply find the translation poetic (i.e. rich in *shiyi*), where in either case his interpretation is primarily driven by his Englishness and probably also his literary knowledge. Besides, where Englishness and Chineseness overlap, the overlapping area can be considered a source of Chineseness from the perspective of a Chinese-speaking reader. A simple and familiar case in point is the use of a rose in the West to, among others, symbolise love, which has long been assimilated into Chineseness. For a detailed account of the symbolic value of rose in the West, which highlights the otherness of Chineseness, see Ferber 2007, 173-177, esp. 176-177.

¹¹⁸ According to Julia C. Lin (1972, p. vii), one of Hu’s instructions on the principles of new poetry was “to use the vernacular language in treating more commonplace themes and emotions”.

¹¹⁹ This was suggested much earlier by Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲, a Chinese diplomat and poet of the late Qing dynasty, though he didn’t mean adopting *baihua*, but rather the use of the then latest vocabulary in composing classical poetry. 我手寫我口 is the exact wording as found in one of his poems, “Zagan” 雜感 (Mixed Emotions). See J.D. Schmidt 1994, 13, where the author suggests the poem was composed within a year following the poet’s 20th birthday (i.e. 1868). For the stanza in Chinese, see J.D. Schmidt 2010, 237.

¹²⁰ All translations in this thesis are mine unless otherwise indicated.

¹²¹ Such benefit may result from narrowing of discrepancies between literature, language and ideology built up over time. These discrepancies are touched on in Ma Meng 1971, 3-4, though the author’s concern is more with the rise of a new genre for effecting such narrowing.

readers which adds to the unintelligibility of modern poetry,¹²² considering that everyone has his unique “mouth”, though following promotion, popularisation and proliferation of use of Putonghua in mainland China especially after 1949¹²³ such an “ideal” has partly lost its practical significance.¹²⁴

Due to their ad hoc nature, the six arguments listed above are subject to further revision and refinement during and after the literature review, and their revised and refined version will hopefully constitute an operational framework underlying the proposed theory of *shiyi* as characterised by the “subtlety-unintelligibility” continuum, which explains the status of main argument accorded to Argument 2. The **missing link** mentioned above, according to argument 2, is subtlety. **Subtlety** is defined as “the positive attribute of a poem or any parts thereof that contributes to possible realisation of *shiyi*”. Subtlety, in turn, is based on meaningfulness of the poem or any parts thereof, which is further dependent largely on familiarity. Subtlety, however, is not necessarily leading to *shiyi*, because the latter is related to truthfulness: this means only when subtlety is promoting the enhancement of truthfulness is it leading to *shiyi*. It is further suggested that meaningfulness is the first-level cognitive effect derived from reading poetry through first-level interpretation, which may not lead to subtlety, the intermediary that in turn is, though not necessarily, conducive to *shiyi*, or the second-level cognitive effect, through higher-level interpretation. Moreover, Arguments 3 and 5 are closely related to Argument 1, as prosody and Chineseness are defined as constituting elements of the common cultural-literary macro-context. Argument 4 can be regarded as the same coin viewed from the other side with reference to the “macro-context” of Argument 1, but discussion from the perspective of Argument 4 is likely to further illuminate the significance of Argument 1. Besides, it is suggested to carry out our discussion and poetry analysis with the concept of the general reader to avoid confronting too many practical problems resulting from individual differences of different readers.

¹²² Wang Li 王力 instead considers the problem from the perspective of appreciation, remarking that the use of a dialect in poetry composition may result in difficulty in appreciating the beauty of a poem by a reader (1959, 154).

¹²³ It is interesting to note that classical poetry is now commonly composed by poets in mainland China according to new rhyme books (such as Shanghai guji chubanshe 1989) compiled in accordance with standard Putonghua pronunciations of *xiandai* Hanyu 現代漢語 (modern Chinese).

¹²⁴ This is still a significant argument as a large number of new poems were composed before 1949, and many new poets in Hong Kong compose(d) in Cantonese or written Chinese heavily influenced by Cantonese. Cantonese is, according to Chaofen Sun (2006, 31), the only Chinese dialect that has developed into a high degree of sophistication.

Argument 6 explores the effect of adopting different vehicles for literary expression, namely *wenyan* and *baihua*, on a poem with reference to the potential inherent in such vehicles for attaining “subtlety”, a concept suggested in Argument 2.¹²⁵ Argument 2, which is the main argument directly supporting the proposed theory of *shiyi*, builds on the foundation of Argument 1, for it is only under a double-contextualisation mechanism based on a common macro-context that the said subtlety-unintelligibility continuum is considered valid and operational. Tentatively, the double-contextualisation mechanism is defined as consisting of internal contextualisation and external contextualisation. Generally, to contextualise an idea, statement or event is to place it within its larger setting in which it acquires its true and complete meaning. Specifically to poetry interpretation, to contextualise is to assign a meaning to the poem by means of placing the purported meaning within the context of the poem and that of the environment (including the culture, literary tradition, etc.) in which the poem is written. In the hypothesis, **internal contextualisation** refers to placing the purported meaning within the context of an individual’s micro-context/Micro-context, while **external contextualisation** refers to placing the purported meaning without his micro-context/Macro-context. In practice, internal contextualisation involves referring the meaningful units in a poem (such as characters, phrases and longer expressions in a poem that can be singled out initially for comprehension) to the micro-context/Micro-context, while external contextualisation involves referring the meaningful units to the macro-context/Macro-context. This theoretical framework, with Argument 2 as the main argument and the other five as supplementary arguments, thus serves to instil into the proposed hypothesis the operability required for poetry analysis.

Central to the hypothesis are the 12 key terms in the arguments: **macro-context** (including **Macro-context**), **micro-context** (including **Micro-context**), **general reader**, **internal contextualisation**, **external contextualisation**, **subtlety**, **unintelligibility**, **familiarity**, **shiyi**, **prosodic devices**, **Chineseness** and **vernacular benefit**. Except for familiarity and vernacular benefit, all key terms have been defined earlier. The remaining ones will be defined below.

¹²⁵ We need not actually opt for either *wenyan* or *baihua* as the device for literary expression, as it appears that some successful modern poems, as well as classical poems composed in the modern time, are written in a “poetic language” having many strengths of both vehicles of expression which cannot be reduced to a pure version of either form of written Chinese. For a detailed analysis, please refer to Chapter 2. It suffices to say here that it is actually not *baihua* in its truest sense that is used in composing a poem, whatever sub-genre it belongs, but a poetic (not in the artistic sense related to *shiyi*) language that has been worked on and polished to make it fit for written purposes.

In general, familiarity means the state of being familiar with something, or the state of having knowledge about something. Referring back to a preliminary characterisation suggested earlier,¹²⁶ **familiarity** is now defined as the degree of understanding of the macro-context (or Macro-context) that an individual reader has possessed.

As for vernacular benefit, it is suggested earlier that “[s]uch benefit may result from narrowing of discrepancies between literature, language and ideology built up over time [out of the adoption of the vernacular in literature writing]”.¹²⁷ Vernacular benefit, if sustained, can be a significant force for overcoming the unintelligibility problem due to a lack of familiarity. However, if it is the paradox of benefit that is finally proved correct, such a powerful force otherwise useful in overcoming the unintelligibility problem may as well be non-existent from the very beginning. Accordingly, **vernacular benefit** is here defined as “such benefit that may result from narrowing of discrepancies between literature, language and ideology built up over time through the adoption of the vernacular in literature writing”.

Of the above key terms, macro-context, micro-context and general reader are closely related to one another, and so are internal contextualisation and external contextualisation. Besides, subtlety, unintelligibility and familiarity are significant in explicating *shiyi*. Prosodic devices, Chineseness and vernacular benefit can be considered as contributing factors of familiarity. Definitions of all these terms will be further modified, their interrelations spelt out, and the arguments containing them further strengthened as appropriate, in light of findings in the literature review, so that the hypothesis can be reworked into a revised hypothesis comprising a fully-fledged theoretical framework suitable for practical purposes.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ In Section 1.5.A, p. 14, it is suggested that “a contrast is made between the influence of the less familiar West and that of the more familiar East, where ‘familiarity’, in the sense of “a state of being familiar to a work or any part thereof resulting from one’s access to the tradition, or rather the traditional or existing knowledge base, to which the work or any part thereof refers”, can be a possible starting point for deliberating on the differences between the two sub-genres, and by extension, addressing the unintelligibility problem”.

¹²⁷ See n.121 above.

¹²⁸ This agrees with what a hypothesis, which “primarily arise[s] from a set of ‘hunches’ that are tested through a study”, aims to do, i.e. to “bring clarity, specificity and focus to a research problem” (Kumar 2011, 81-82).

1.6 EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND VALUE:

It is expected that the two proposed concepts of “subtlety” and “unintelligibility”, plus their underlying “subtlety-unintelligibility” continuum constitutive of the proposed framework based on *shiyi* as hypothesised, will be able to justify or refute the propriety of “attributing the generally poorer reception to Chinese new poetry to the alleged unintelligibility problem” in terms of *shiyi*, which by then will already be clearly characterised. Besides, the hypothesis is supposed to be able to differentiate real poems rich in *shiyi* from false poems lacking in *shiyi*, so that the undesirable phenomenon of casually publishing some writings as “poetry”, as Feng Xuefeng suggests,¹²⁹ can be avoided. In this way, a fairer comparison can then be made between classical poetry and new poetry, whose corpus will comprise only real poems by then.

Hence, the thesis should have significant theoretical and practical implications for both poetry appreciation and writing and poetic studies.

¹²⁹ Feng Xuefeng 1951, 2-3 (see n.54 above).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND PARAMETERS FOR A PROPOSED INTEGRATED APPROACH

2.1 INTRODUCTION:

Following the formulation of the hypothesis in Chapter 1, a literature review will be conducted in this chapter to collate and analyse theories and/or approaches related to the unintelligibility problem, whose nature and resolution are considered the key to fully addressing our research problem. Owing to the complexity of the theoretical pursuits involved in the thesis, a wide range of studies, researches and theories have to be consulted before the most appropriate ones can be identified for further theorisation along with the hypothesis. The hypothesis, accordingly, is to serve two functions in this chapter. First, it focuses our attention on the 12 key terms (preliminarily defined in Chapter 1) used in the arguments in the search of appropriate theories and/or approaches. Second, it provides a foundation for building up in Chapter 3, on findings in this chapter, a revised hypothesis whose explanatory power can be tested through poetry analysis in Chapter 4.¹³⁰

To make this enormous undertaking more systematic and organised, the literature review is divided into two main parts covering, respectively, “the unintelligibility problem of modern Chinese poetry” (**Section 2.2**) as properly conceptualised through the exploration of the authorship problematic, as well as some available “possible solutions” (**Section 2.3**) grounded in a number of disciplines, including Chinese language studies (Section 2.3.A), Chinese and Western poetics (Section 2.3.B), linguistics (Section 2.3.C), hermeneutics (Section 2.3.D), previous research efforts in a similar direction as this thesis (Section 2.3.E), and proposed parameters for formulation of an integrated approach suggested in view of the introduced theories/concepts of the above-mentioned approaches (Section 2.3.F). This follows a logical order of presentation by first further clarifying the unintelligibility problem, then detailing possible solutions to the unintelligibility problem (including past efforts in solving the problem) and their flaws/weaknesses (if any), and finally providing the way forward for solving the unintelligibility problem in terms of some parameters identified.

Obviously, introduction to the three perspectives of literary studies, linguistics

¹³⁰ This in general agrees with what is suggested concerning the nature of a hypothesis in n.128, Chapter 1.

and philosophy can at most be selective, as any exhaustive account will simply overload this chapter. The inevitable route is thus to search for approaches seemingly applicable to the analysis of poetry, while fundamentally also capable of accounting for the whole process from creation to appreciation of literature.¹³¹ Besides, a guiding rule in this task is working towards achieving theoretical simplicity from among a galaxy of theories and/or approaches,¹³² which is to render the theories and/or approaches identified more readily applicable to practical analysis. Except for theoretical simplicity, the theories and/or approaches discussed in this chapter will be evaluated with reference to their applicability to the research problem and to strengthening the hypothesis, as well as their theoretical rigor, internal coherence and self-sufficiency.¹³³

Accordingly, Section 2.3.A and Section 2.3.C will centre on a linguistic perspective, Section 2.3.B will take up a literary perspective and Section 2.3.D will focus on a philosophical perspective. Following deliberations on theories and/or concepts in earlier sections, a detailed picture will be drawn in Section 2.3.F so as to contextualise the unintelligibility problem identified in Section 2.2 by means of suggested parameters for the proposed integrated approach (based on *shiyi*) endowed with the benefit of theoretical simplicity, which is posed to be able to answer the research problem of this thesis, namely the justifiability of attributing a poorer reception to Chinese new poetry to the unintelligibility problem. The parameters presented therein will as a result be structured from all three perspectives, after taking into account earlier works outlined in Section 2.3.E, and also be applied in Chapter 3 to condition the hypothesis and strengthen it to become a revised hypothesis comprising the framework used for poetry analysis in Chapter 4. At the end of this chapter, a “concluding remark” (Section 2.4) will summarise the chapter, and pave

¹³¹ This in a way follows what James Liu (1975, 140) suggests: “Having made due allowances for differences in beliefs, assumptions, prejudices, and ways of thinking, between different cultures and different ages, we must aspire to be transhistorical and transcultural, searching for literary features and qualities and critical concepts and standards that transcend historical and cultural differences.”

¹³² See Chapter 1, n.24.

¹³³ “Theoretical rigor, internal coherence and self-sufficiency” should also be considered basic constituents of the **background theory**. Besides, this literature review is not intended to be an accurate historical record of academic scholarship. Hence, the review is not interested in resolving any disputed attribution of approaches/theories to renowned scholars, as long as the approaches and/or theories *per se* are of relevant use to this thesis. Thus, whether it is really, say, Plato’s theory as claimed by Friedrich Nietzsche is not of our primary concern if Nietzsche’s Plato is of such relevant use.

way for further conceptualisation and development of the integrated approach in the subsequent chapter.

2.2 THE UNINTELLIGIBILITY PROBLEM OF MODERN CHINESE POETRY:

The unintelligibility problem introduced in the last chapter is now put into different perspectives in addition to that of familiarity, with a view to finding a more satisfactory solution to the problem by means of possible improvement made to the hypothesis.

2.2.A The unintelligibility problem as viewed from different perspectives

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the unintelligibility problem of modern Chinese poetry can be examined from many angles, like one from the familiarity viewpoint touched on in the hypothesis, but sometimes in another rewarding manner if conceptualised from a different perspective that promises some additional insights.¹³⁴ A case in point is the distinction between the “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” study of literature introduced by René Wellek and Austin Warren in their co-authored classic *Theory of Literature*,¹³⁵ which distinguishes an extrinsic approach involving perspectives of biography, psychology, society, ideas and other arts, from an intrinsic approach incorporating the study of euphony, rhythm, meter, stylistics, imagery, metaphor, symbols and myth.¹³⁶ Initially, such elaborate and intricate classification and delineation of areas and angles in the study of literature draws attention to whether the unintelligibility problem can be resolved through incorporation of more areas and angles in our reading of a poem, especially when the authors’ systematic analysis of the two approaches was seldom given adequate attention in classical or

¹³⁴ The unintelligibility problem, by its very existence, suggests strongly that the current approaches as adopted in the study of Chinese new poetry have so far failed to resolve the problem, and hence the rationale for looking for possible solutions elsewhere.

¹³⁵ This refers to Wellek and Warren 1973. In Leroy Searle’s words (2005, 691), the book, first published in 1949, was “the most ambitious [...] attempt to articulate a theory for New Criticism”. However, after surveying a large corpus of Wellek’s works including *Theory of Literature*, Sarah Lawall (1988, 4) disputes equating Wellek’s ideas to Formalist New Criticism, arguing that Wellek actually operates within a different framework.

¹³⁶ In Wellek and Warren 1973, a monograph in four parts, Part Three discusses the extrinsic approach to the study of literature, and Part Four elaborates on the intrinsic study of literature.

new Chinese literary study, and thus may afford a new direction to the interpretation of Chinese poetry. It should, however, be emphasised that as far as Wellek, as well as the Wellek as construed in *Theory of Literature*,¹³⁷ is concerned, and despite the two authors' inclination for the intrinsic approach, there is indeed an insistence on keeping "a close dialectical relationship between the norms of the autonomous literary work and the system of norms in history".¹³⁸ Thus, unlike other new criticism classics, *Theory of Literature* has indeed duly incorporated a historical dimension as a bedrock element in their ideal form of literary study,¹³⁹ and there is *not* in the book a definite and clear-cut divide between the intrinsic and extrinsic approaches.¹⁴⁰ Regrettably, with all kinds of intrinsic and extrinsic areas of study, the approach the authors have presented is far too complicated and aggressive for a general reader (i.e. any individual reader considered to be displaying the characteristics of *the* general reader) to apply when reading a text. Their approach is,¹⁴¹ therefore, more suitable for scholars and researchers, but not ordinary readers, supposedly the major target of published poetry in general.¹⁴² This highlights one aspect of the key term "**general reader**", which is spending no more than a reasonable amount of time and effort in comprehension of a poem, an amount that is, generally speaking, not to be compared

¹³⁷ As will be seen shortly, there is perceived contradiction between the Wellek as a generally recognised New Criticism theorist and the Wellek as construed through reading of *Theory of Literature*.

¹³⁸ See Lawall 1988, 9. This is also clearly reflected in *Theory of Literature* where the chapter on literary history (ch. 19) is placed under the part on "The Intrinsic Study of Literature".

¹³⁹ It is therefore not unjustifiably relevant to see a comment such as "[w]e could go even farther, and propose that Wellek--far from being the house philosopher of New Criticism--has helped make possible a practice of self-conscious reading grounded in history, as well as a modern tradition of histories of literary theory" (Lawall 1988, 22).

¹⁴⁰ This is further supported by Wellek himself, who remarks that "I believe my own *Theory of Literature* (1949) was widely understood as an attack on 'extrinsic' methods, as a repudiation of 'literary history,' though the book actually contains a final chapter on 'Literary History' which emphatically argues against the neglect of this discipline [...]" (1963, 6).

¹⁴¹ Their approach, though methodologically much more complicated, is in agreement with Pettersson's "scholarly or critical investigations" of the work, which, together with his appreciation of the work, is classified in Section 1.5.B.2 as the second-level (higher-level) interpretation.

¹⁴² It is noted, however, that with the Chinese translation of *Theory of Literature* appearing in Beijing in 1984, its perceived *emphasis* on the "intrinsic" study of literature was "extremely welcome to Chinese literature and criticism, which were then desperately trying to break away from the grip of political determinism, the tenets of the official cultural policy based on Mao Tse-tung's 1942 Yen[']an talks and his theory of class struggle." See Zhang Longxi 1992, 109.

to that of a scholar's or a researcher's.¹⁴³

As a somewhat contrived continuation and development of the intrinsic/extrinsic divide, Robert Eaglestone has, in his *Ethical Criticism: Reading After Levinas*,¹⁴⁴ borrowed from Denis Donoghue's *Ferocious Alphabets*¹⁴⁵ the distinction between "epi-reading" and "graphi-reading" for theorisation. As relayed and revitalised by Eaglestone, epi-reading is predicated on the desire to hear the absent person, so that the epi-reader moves swiftly from print and language to speech and voice and the present person, and reading functions as a translation from words to acts. Epi-reading thus transposes the written words into a somehow corresponding situation of persons, voices, characters, conflicts and conciliations, during the process of which language is rendered a transparent window through which the world of actors, actions and events is seen. By contrast, graphi-reading prioritises language, text and reading over "a nostalgia for the human" and seeks to engage with texts "in their virtuality" in such a way that the graphi-reader reads the words yet refuses to pass beyond or create a world behind them.¹⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that the author classifies Paul Ricoeur (whose theory will be introduced shortly) as an epi-reader,¹⁴⁷ while regarding all deconstructive criticism as graphi-reading, thus placing Roland Barthes (whose theory will be introduced shortly) among those graphi-readers who experience "the eclipse of voice by text".¹⁴⁸ Compared to the approach in *Theory of Literature*, Eaglestone's paradigm explicitly effects a shift towards the reader focus, emphasising how a reader's chosen approach is able to influence his reading and/or interpretation of a text, thereby simplifying Wellek and Warren's approach to a more manageable level in terms of efforts and time invested in the reading and/or interpretation process, which should be more acceptable to a **general reader** as mentioned above.

M.H. Abrams, on the other hand, has developed a comprehensive yet concise scheme in *The Mirror and the Lamp*, which covers four elements in the total situation of a work of art: the work, the artist, the universe (which may consist of "people and actions, ideas and feelings, material things and events, or super-sensible essences")

¹⁴³ See the elaboration in Section 1.5.B.1, and esp. n.78, on bounded rationality.

¹⁴⁴ Eaglestone 1997.

¹⁴⁵ Donoghue 1981.

¹⁴⁶ Eaglestone 1997, 3-4.

¹⁴⁷ This classification of Ricoeur is contested by Geir Amdal, who remarks that "[i]t is quite possible, in fact, that Ricoeur's theory intergrates both models of reading, and provides a synthesis of both of them". See Amdal 2001, 25.

¹⁴⁸ Eaglestone 1997, 3-4.

and the audience.¹⁴⁹ He then, from a historical perspective, differentiates between four main groups of literary theories, which include mimetic theories (exploring the work/universe relationship), pragmatic theories (exploring the work/audience relationship), expressive theories (exploring the work/artist relationship) and objective theories (focusing on close reading of the work).¹⁵⁰ This underscores the significance of focusing our attention not merely on the author or the text, and displays a much more balanced view of assessing a literary experience.¹⁵¹ However, the suggestion that literature was usually understood as a mirror (i.e. a reflector of external objects in the real world, in some kind of mimesis) up to the Romantics but more like a lamp (i.e. a radiant projector whose light is compared to that of a writer's inner soul spilled out to illuminate the world) for the Romantics,¹⁵² actually reinforces the distinction, albeit a diachronic one here, between emphasising the role of language and/or the text and emphasising the role of the author, with the world already represented in the text by the author.

The above introduction to some classic but then innovative approaches from the West suggests that study and interpretation of literature can in general be considered from two broad perspectives: the internal and the external perspectives. This naturally revolves into a dichotomy with various theories fixed on a point lying within the two ends of a continuum. At one end, more emphasis is placed on the text *per se*, and at the other, more attention is given to some external factors, i.e. the author's life as well as economic, political, sociological and other related or conditioning circumstances. It is in this sense that the **authorship problematic**, i.e. whether the role of the author is to be taken as the predominant one as compared to the text and/or the reader, is considered highly significant in the matter of interpretation, and hence its relevance to this thesis. Such conceptualisation of the problem is, to a **general reader**, a simpler and more direct route to viewing the whole exercise of interpretation. Solving the authorship problematic is, therefore, the key to identifying the most appropriate approach to interpretation. And if the most appropriate approach is determined, a reader adopting such an approach will

¹⁴⁹ Abrams 1971, 6. N.B.: Abrams's book was first published in 1953, not long after the publication of the first edition of Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature* in 1949.

¹⁵⁰ Abrams 1971, 7 and 8-29.

¹⁵¹ Based on Abrams's scheme, James Liu (1975, 9-13) proposes his own analytical scheme for theories of literature comprising instead the universe, the writer, the work and the reader, illustrating in a more cogent and convincing manner the interrelations among these four elements. Liu's scheme, esp. those aspects more relevant to our theorisation, will be introduced in a later section.

¹⁵² Abrams 1971, viii.

supposedly be in a better position to gain a better understanding of the text, or to avoid encountering the unintelligibility problem, provided of course that the text concerned is intended to inform and capable of making sense accordingly.

2.2.B Authorship

Indispensable from poetry interpretation is the authorship problematic, as stated above, whether it is related to the identification of the true author,¹⁵³ consideration of his background as decisive to accurate interpretation or simply the authorship problematic that is intriguing in itself. It is only after the authorship problematic is resolved that a fine line can be drawn between what is relevant and what is irrelevant to poetry interpretation, and hence a better chance of achieving a more intelligible interpretation, or avoiding the unintelligibility problem, by the reader.¹⁵⁴ As pointed out by Seán Burke, however, questions related to authorship (and by extension, the authorship problematic) have been “raised in a myriad tongues and lexicons throughout the history of Western thought”, yet every attempt to resolve the issue “has only served to rejuvenate the debate”.¹⁵⁵

The authorship problematic, however, can expediently be viewed from the perspective of the author or from that of the author’s intention as represented in the text. The notions of Roland Barthes’s “the Death of the Author” and Julia Kristeva’s “intertextuality”, for instance, can be conceived of as tackling the issue from the perspective of the author. Alternatively, the problematic can be analysed in terms of intentionalism (which states a weaker case for the presence of the author) that is

¹⁵³ Unlike the authorship problematic, this identification of author, narrower in scope, is concerned with finding the authentic author for a piece of work whose artistic value is established or recognised, as, for instance, in the case concerning the disputed authorship of the Russian novel *And Quiet Flows the Don* attributed to the Nobel Laureate Mikhail Sholokhov outlined in Hjort 2007.

¹⁵⁴ “The Intentional Fallacy” (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1954c) and “The Affective Fallacy” (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1954b) are the two influential essays generally considered to have set the stage for the discussion.

¹⁵⁵ See Burke 1995, xv. This anthology, which contains 32 authored essays/extracts on authorship or its related problems, clearly demonstrates the variety and diversity of deliberations on the issue throughout the Western history. And, as the title suggests, Seán Burke’s *The Death and Return of the Author* (1998) strives to relay, reaffirm or rejoice the rebirth of the author. Besides, William Irwin’s *The Death and Resurrection of the Author?* (2002) also samples some best recent articles on both sides of the debate resulting from Roland Barthes’s claim of “the death of the Author” introduced in a later section.

relatively more inclined to analysing how an author's intention is executed in a text. Or it can be viewed from the perspective of reception theory as promulgated by Hans Robert Jauss, thus incorporating the audience in the discussion, or from the perspective of artistic value, which again focuses primarily on the text. As such, whereas the authorship problematic effectively reduces Abrams's four-element framework (and Wellek and Warren's approach, as well as their approach as simplified by Eaglestone's paradigm) to a simplified model, this model operationally covers all four elements without any loss of detail. With the statement of this model as such, however, it is still a literature model distant from one possessing the practical operationality required for poetry analysis. Hence, it is imperative to go further into the detail of this model in order to strengthen its practical operationality in this thesis.

2.2.B.1 Roland Barthes's "The Death of the Author"

As Barthes writes in his famous short essay "The Death of the Author",¹⁵⁶ "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author",¹⁵⁷ and to give an Author to a text "is to impose a limit on that text" and to close the writing by assigning a single, corresponding interpretation to it.¹⁵⁸ This highlights the tension between the reader and the author over the claim to authority in the interpretation of a text,¹⁵⁹ as well as the role played by the author in the closure and openness of a text's interpretation, and can thus be examined as a new form of construct of the authorship problematic.

No matter what is the true meaning of "the death of the Author" as intended by Barthes,¹⁶⁰ at the extreme of this notion as it is applied to poetry interpretation, its

¹⁵⁶ The essay first appeared as "La mort de l'auteur" in *Mantéia* V in 1968. Its English translation by Stephen Heath (in Barthes 1977) is adopted here.

¹⁵⁷ Barthes 1977, 148.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 147.

¹⁵⁹ In response to Barthes, Michel Foucault introduces the concept of "author function", suggesting essentially that "the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses", and that "the author [can be considered] an ideological product" (2000, 221). Foucault's author can be seen as filling the void left by Barthes's theory, though it is of limited relevance to this thesis considering its indirect impingement on the interpretation problem.

¹⁶⁰ For instance, it is suggested that to greet the new era of literature, Barthes would want to sacrifice the author, who "had been the idol of traditional criticism and the central idea of literary history" (Lombardo 2010, 106). William Irwin, in comparison, remarks that Barthes's essay was used to argue

adherents could be tempted to focus on the text alone while forsaking all details about the author,¹⁶¹ not to mention the fact that the very author must have been (aware of his being) the first reader of his own work. An approach of skewed emphasis as implied in this notion would also fail to take into account the actual circumstances in which interpretation takes place, including, but not limited to, the influential literary tradition that may often be at work.¹⁶² Or rather, such a tradition is minimised as merely another text whose meaningfulness relies on yet others. In this way, following the death of the author, the reader, now empowered to “freely” interpret an open text, is effectively thrown into a state of loss of direction, where there can be no valid and fruitful (study of) interpretation.¹⁶³

2.2.B.2 Julia Kristeva’s Intertextuality

Kristeva’s semiotic notion of intertextuality can be considered conceptually a step forward in the direction as pointed to by Barthes’s “The Death of the Author”, but with more emphasis placed on the text, seemingly in a more objective manner than a reader-focused approach. On the other hand, intertextuality is not at all inconceivable from the traditional perspective of treasuring the continuity inherent in literature/culture, as represented by the saying of *wu yizi wu laichu* 無一字無來處 (literally, there must be some source for each and every word [in a poem]) in classical

that the authors of plays, novels and poems “are unimportant and even repressive in interpretation” (2002, ix).

¹⁶¹ Ignoring the author altogether can sometimes be argued as pursuing a practical strategy. For instance, some would consider that it makes a good deal of practical sense as, in some cases, we simply do not know the identity of the author, while in others, we could only guess at the author’s intentions because we have no relevant information, which even if we have may not necessarily illuminate the poem concerned. See Bertens 2008, 19.

¹⁶² The role of tradition, or convention, is more complicated than that of intertextuality whose straightforward albeit widespread operation is mentioned in the next section. For instance, it is suggested that “[i]n certain highly developed literatures, and especially in certain epochs, the poet merely uses an established convention: the language, so to speak, poeticizes for him” (Wellek and Warren 1973, 24).

¹⁶³ While emphasising the flaw in neglecting the role of the author in the interpretation of a literary work, James Liu (1977, 5) rightly remarks that “if a literary work of art is [...] an intersubjective, purely intentional object, which has its origin in the creative acts of consciousness on the part of the author, then an ontology of literature which is based entirely on the phenomenology of reading as an aesthetic experience but which excludes any consideration of the creative act would seem to be one-sided”.

Chinese poetry.¹⁶⁴ In essence, Kristeva's intertextuality, which refers to "[...] transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another", is an "open" concept, according to which each text is considered to exist in relation to other texts, and to owe more to other texts than to its own maker as far as its interpretation is concerned.¹⁶⁵ It follows that if every signifying practice is "a field of transpositions of various signifying systems", or an intertextuality, its place of enunciation and its denoted "object" are "never single, complete, and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated".¹⁶⁶ In other words, rather than confining our attention to the structure of a text, Kristeva argues for studying how that very structure came into being, which involves sitting the text within the "totality of previous or synchronic texts" of which it was a "transformation".¹⁶⁷

Kristeva's approach is of course not immune from critique. For instance, "totality", as Henry Lefebvre understands, is the concept we cannot do without when we are dealing with human reality, where both theory and practice encompass a conception of totality; in its quest for totality, however, each human activity comes

¹⁶⁴ In his "Da Hong Qufu shu" 答洪駒父書 (A Letter in Reply to Hong Qufu), Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045-1105) remarks that "It is most difficult to compose all by oneself. We can indeed find a source for every character in the elder Du's [Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770)] poetry and Tuizhi's [Han Tuizhi, or Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824)] essays. Just that those after them are not so well-versed, and so Han and Du are thought of as self-composing every bit of their works on their own. Those masters good at composition in the past were really proficient in cultivating from everything in this world, so much so as to be able to absorb into their writings even the cliché used by authors in the ancient time, simply transforming with a golden touch iron into gold." (自作語最難，老杜作詩，退之作文，無一字無來處，蓋後人讀書少，故謂韓杜自作此語耳。古之能為文章者，真能陶冶萬物，雖取古人之陳言入於翰墨，如靈丹一粒，點鐵成金也。) See Ma Jiangwei 2004, 61 for the excerpt of Huang's letter, as well as an analysis of his theory on *dian tie cheng jin* 點鐵成金 (turing iron into gold) and its legacy.

¹⁶⁵ Kristeva 1984, 59-60. Kristeva's intertextuality (her *intertextualité* coined in 1966) actually precedes Barthes's "the death of the Author" (proclaimed in 1968), and hence our "conceptually a step forward" in the beginning of this sub-section. See Friedman 1991, 146 for a brief chronological account.

¹⁶⁶ Kristeva 1984, 60.

¹⁶⁷ See Chandler 1994. For comparison, Wai-lim Yip (1993, 146) has pointed out that "[...] Chinese literary theory and criticism from the very beginning has always been inclined to favor the total activity that occurs *outside* [italics in original] the word[s] and phrases of a text. What we read is not one poem but a fabric of many poems, the concerto and symphony comprised of many other poems and voices". Yip's model will be introduced in a later section.

into confrontation with other activities which it tries to render as its subordinates.¹⁶⁸ Accordingly, any interpretation theory based on Kristeva's intertextuality that stresses the totality of a text may turn out to be unsatisfactory, in that too much if not all significance is attached to the totality, resulting in a much reduced role of the reader/text. It is of course noted that intertextuality is a concept unconcerned with authors as individuals, and it treats all texts as part of a network of discourse that includes culture, history and social practices as well as other literary works. When put into Kristeva's project, however, this concept at once arouses a sense of contradiction. This is because despite her contention that "[...] mere structure was not sufficient to understand the world of meaning in literature and other human behaviours [and that t]wo more elements [i.e. history and the speaking subject] were necessary",¹⁶⁹ intertextuality by definition precludes the inclusion of the speaking subject in the analysis,¹⁷⁰ even though a historical dimension has been duly incorporated. Moreover, even if intertextuality accepts texts referring to the speaking subject (such as his biography, diary, letters, or texts with the speaking subject as the object of description) as part of the system, so that it does incorporate into the system the speaking subject (or at least his representations), this speaking subject will still be reduced to many other texts as Kristeva is actually concerned with the effects to which the speaking subject is subjected.

Besides, adoption of intertextuality in a text's interpretation may render the task "unmanageable" insofar as a **general reader** is involved because theoretically there is no end to the search of meaning in a "totality". For instance, if the text derives its meaning from its relations with all other existing texts, as soon as the conceptual repertoire of an individual changes by the addition (or elimination) of another text, the totality of relations changes, and so does the construed meaning of the text in question. The implication of this is that, even for the same reader, the text in question will have different meanings at different times of interpretation, and also at the same time of interpretation when it is perceived subsequently at different times. This is what

¹⁶⁸ See Lefebvre 2008, 180-182.

¹⁶⁹ From Diana Kuprel's "In Defence of Human Singularity: Diana Kuprel Speaks with Julia Kristeva" (*Canadian Review of Books* 28(8/9): 21-26, January 2000), cited in McAfee 2004, 7.

¹⁷⁰ In the concluding sections of her "Word, Dialogue, and Novel" (1966), Kristeva "effectively eliminate the writer from the analysis of intertextuality and anticipate the knot that ties intertextuality with the death of the author" (Friedman 1991, 147-148). In Kristeva's own words from this essay, "[the writer] becomes an anonymity, an absence, a blank space [...]" (cited in *ibid.*, 148). And in Zhao Weirong's 趙渭絨 words, Kristeva "is altogether avoiding the intersubjectivity, [and] in her writings 'the author' is [considered] voided, absent and nameless" (2012, 123).

William Irwin refers to when he remarks that “the theory and practice go too far when, for some, they assume the relations between and among texts actually change canonical texts”.¹⁷¹ Focusing on the text and its related texts only also neglects any possible inventiveness of an author in bringing about *shiyi* in an original manner out of existing raw materials, and it is highly unlikely to satisfactorily account for the *shiyi* of a poem if only its related texts are analysed without considering the significant input of an author’s invention in the process of writing.

Irwin’s another scathing attack on intertextuality is made by exposing the contradiction inherent in the concept. He comments that “the nonexistence of a transcendental signified” Kristeva proclaims “does not logically imply that signifiers refer only to other signifiers” because “[t]he referent of any given signifier can be fixed through ordinary/conventional use or [an] utterer’s intention”.¹⁷² Contrary to the concept of intertextuality, therefore, Irwin eagerly argues for the unavoidable authorial intention as he sees that “intertextual connections are not somehow magically made between inanimate texts but are the products of authorial design”.¹⁷³ This shifts the pendulum to the other side of its sway, and brings us to the next section on intentionalism, which should be more relevant to solving the authorship problematic, and hence the interpretation problems of poetry as studied in this thesis.

2.2.B.3 Stephen Davies’s Intentionalism

Davies is considered to have shed light on the authorship problematic by means of his exploration of intentionalism. As he suggests, actual intentionalism, hypothetical intentionalism and the value-maximising theory are the three major theories concerning the interpretation of literary fictions.¹⁷⁴ In essence, actual intentionalism argues that through successful execution, the author’s intentions determine or at least constrain the proper interpretation of his work. In contrast, hypothetical intentionalism holds that the interpreter is to surmise what a hypothetical author could have intended the work to mean. As for the value-maximising theory, it maintains that the text is to be interpreted in ways that would maximise its value as a work of literature. Common to these theories is the standpoint that the object of interpretation is regarded as fictional literary works and identified as the works of

¹⁷¹ Irwin 2004, 236.

¹⁷² Ibid., 235.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 240.

¹⁷⁴ See Davies 2006. It is noted that Davies is discussing “theories concerning the interpretation of literary fictions” (223), but his thesis can be applied to the discussion of literary works at large.

their authors.¹⁷⁵ In other words, the theories are based on the notion that these works “take their identity from the circumstances of their creation”, which include “facts of their authorship, of the literary conventions, styles, and genres, as well as the wider linguistic practices, of the time”.¹⁷⁶ It is in this way that the theories involve the “universe” in Abrams’s four-element framework and are compatible with the approach in *Theory of Literature* as presented earlier. As for their differences, the three theories elucidated by Davies are pursued in interpretation by asking what was meant, what could have been meant, and what ways of reading the work are valuable respectively.¹⁷⁷

According to Davies’s analysis, however, actual intentionalism cannot account for the propriety or legitimacy of some interpretations, or alternatively it must be weakened to the point that the considerations raised by hypothetical intentionalists and value maximisers become relevant; and hypothetical intentionalism either reduces to the value-maximising theory, which provides a comparatively more accurate and clearer expression of the position, or it mistakenly attributes to hypothesised intentions the kind of force that attaches only to actual intentions.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, he concludes that of the three theories which turn out to be not so starkly opposed to each other, the value-maximising theory is to be preferred because the alternatives are too narrow, or are misleadingly presented, or invoke value maximising without acknowledging its centrality for the kinds of interpretations under discussion.¹⁷⁹

Davies’s exposition of intentionalism results in a shift of attention from the author or the author’s intention to the (artistic) value of an artistic work, or the

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 223-224.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 224.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 225.

¹⁷⁸ Davies’s main points of argument are: (1) actual intentionalism is mistaken in regarding literary interpretation as closely paralleling the interpretation of ordinary author-centred discourse; (2) in its strong form, actual intentionalism is concerned with utterer’s meaning (i.e. what the author meant), but neglects literary interpretations that respect the work’s identity and the goal of appreciating the work as such, yet which focus on utterance meaning (i.e. what it could mean) and its literary merit; (3) in its weakened form, actual intentionalism considers all interpretations that would not be disavowed, thus it must concede that hypothetical intentionalism and the value-maximising theory are on an equal footing with it; (4) hypothetical intentionalism is not far from the value-maximising theory in that, from the beginning, it adjudicates between competing interpretations by reference to the merits they show in the work. (2006, 226-247.)

¹⁷⁹ Davies 2006, 227.

literariness of a literary work, or the *shiyi* (our key term) of a poem as far as this thesis is concerned. Notwithstanding this way of tackling the authorship problematic only indirectly, Davies's treatment does suggest a possible shortcut to resolving the problematic by pinpointing a strong and inherent link between a text's valuation and its (proper and/or preferable) interpretation. As can be easily seen, Davies's approach is highly relevant to this thesis if *shiyi* is accordingly taken as a criterion for a poem's evaluation. In other words, if the role of the author, the reader and the text can all be examined in terms of *shiyi* (which is equivalent in status to the literariness of a literary work¹⁸⁰), the authorship problematic can be construed as merely a detour in our pursuit of *shiyi*, which can then be firmly established as the criterion for poetry evaluation, provided that this single criterion is properly defined.¹⁸¹ This detour then effectively reduces the problematic to the problem of *shiyi*.

2.2.B.4 Hans Robert Jauss's Reception Theory

Reception theory, which is characterised as "a general shift in concern from the author and the work to the text and the reader",¹⁸² offers another perspective from which to view the authorship problematic. In a direction apparently travelling away from the focus on the author, Jauss suggests that "the relationship of work to work must now be brought into this interaction between work and mankind", and "the historical coherence of works among themselves must be seen in the interrelations of production and reception".¹⁸³ In other words, as Holub explains, the literary work is "neither completely text nor completely the subjectivity of the reader, but a combination or merger of the two".¹⁸⁴ This way of reinforcing the role of reader is simultaneously reducing the significance of the author, or neglecting the author's significance in the reader's interpretation of the work concerned, and thus suggests

¹⁸⁰ See n.106, n.109 and n.110, Chapter 1.

¹⁸¹ As Zhang Longxi rightly points out, "nothing needs to be excluded from contributing to the understanding of literature: the author, the text, and the reader all have their claims and specific ways of affecting the formation of meaning, and a deeper understanding of literature results from the synthesis of all these claims [...]", and as such, he implicitly criticises Wimsatt and Beardsley for holding only the text as what matters, E. D. Hirsch for focusing merely on the authorial intention and Stanley Fish for neglecting everything but the reader or the interpretive community. (2012a, 136-137.) In this thesis, all of these three parties are not dealt with directly for their somewhat biased position to the authorship problematic.

¹⁸² Holub 1984, p. xii.

¹⁸³ Jauss 1982, 15.

¹⁸⁴ Holub 1984, 84.

how Reception Theory compares unfavourably to the approaches introduced earlier in this chapter in terms of comprehensiveness. As far as this thesis is concerned, therefore, Reception Theory is not considered a satisfactory answer to the authorship problematic.

2.2.B.5 Wolfgang Iser's "the implied reader"

Iser's "the implied reader" represents a shift or return from sheer reader-response criticism to a study of the text, which is done by implicitly defining readers in terms of the text. This is best illustrated by his example of two people gazing at the night sky, looking at the same cluster of stars, with one seeing the image of a plough, and another finding a dipper up above, on which he remarks that it is like the stars in a literary text are fixed, yet the lines that [the readers use to] join them are variable.¹⁸⁵ On that account, a literary work is not a product in itself but an effect to be explored. There is no uniform response to a literary work, though in a way the reader's response is controlled by the text. For Iser, an implied reader is the reader a given literary work requires. Of particular interest to this thesis is that this implied reader is required to exercise his imagination to fill in gaps left by the text, the unwritten part offering an element of indeterminacy, which allows the use of imagination by the reader.¹⁸⁶ Iser does not explain very clearly what this imagination is, except for suggesting that it is by imagination that one fancies that he sees something without realising that he actually does not.¹⁸⁷ On the whole, Iser's model achieves a fair balance between the role of a text (as well as the author that it somewhat represents) and that of the reader. His account of imagination, however, is not sufficiently clear to guide a study of the unintelligibility problem this thesis is concerned with.¹⁸⁸

2.2.B.6 Peter Lamarque's intrinsic value

From another perspective, Peter Lamarque attaches significance to intrinsic value as the criterion for evaluation of literary works.¹⁸⁹ Supplementing Davies's valuation approach as it is considered, Lamarque's approach may thus provide some extra insight on how to relate intrinsic value, or artistic value, to the evaluation, and

¹⁸⁵ Iser 1974, 282.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 283.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 282.

¹⁸⁸ This imagination is probably best tackled in terms of Chineseness and/or macro-context as suggested in adjustment pt. (4), p. 29, in Section 1.5.B.4.

¹⁸⁹ Lamarque 2009, mainly chap. 7, 255-296, on Value.

hence the logically implied correct interpretation of literature, including poetry.

Lamarque probably rightly suggests that “[w]orks that reward continued interest will be those that are amenable to different perspectives, that have the capacity to surprise, and that open up new imaginative possibilities”.¹⁹⁰ Here, the keyword should be “reward”, which exactly highlights the significance of this “rewarding” function of a work as literature, as well as the interplay between the work and the appreciator in/subsequent to the reading activity. This, of course, also foregrounds the fact that “what is rewarded” should receive our foremost attention in our discussion from the very beginning. His suggestion that “values are relative to interests but once the interests have been identified there need be no further relativization”¹⁹¹ is, however, rather untenable. This suggestion is put up, understandably, for establishing the independence of his so-called “*sui generis* pleasures”, “independence” in the sense that the value of a work as literature could be discussed in an isolated manner without the interference of too much subjectivity of/from the appreciator. Unfortunately, this is somewhat refuted by his own statement quoted here: “If there is a scale of lasting or rewarding pleasures then literary works are likely to score higher”.¹⁹² For it is simply impossible to single out “pleasures” from “the experience of the appreciator concerned” for assessment, and even illogical to take the “intrinsic value” of the appreciator’s experience *as* that of the work, while simultaneously asserting that there is the so-called “*sui generis* pleasures” in the work *per se*. Thus, theoretically, his intrinsic value as defined in terms of pleasure seems quite unsatisfactory as far as this thesis is concerned.

Nevertheless, though a vague concept,¹⁹³ operationally Lamarque’s intrinsic value does not quite contradict with our *shiyi*, also a vague concept for the time being,

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 260.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 261.

¹⁹² Ibid., 263.

¹⁹³ Intrinsic value has long been considered a vague concept. In “Intrinsic Value”, a classic essay by Monroe C. Beardsley, it is suggested that the two phrases most often used to define “intrinsic value” are “for its own sake” and “in itself”, of which the latter is considered by Beardsley as more satisfactory. (Beardsley 1965, 1.) Such definitions are regarded as vague in that they can be considered reflexively circular, defining the term by using the term itself in the definitions. Cf. Davison 2012, chap. 1, esp. 14-20 where the author tries to put forward the thesis that “something is intrinsically valuable to a certain degree if and only if its intrinsic structure would lead fully informed, properly functioning valuers to value it for its own sake to that degree” (p. 20).

as derived from the appreciation of a poem and felt by the reader.¹⁹⁴ Except for the weakness suggested in the last paragraph, Lamarque's emphasis on pleasure (the alter ego of his intrinsic value), which is yet to be clearly defined and thus lacks the requisite explanatory power, has rendered his intrinsic value a less preferred choice as an operational criterion for assessment of the artistic value of a poem. Still, his approach of singling out a single intrinsic value is operationally sound and desirable, while his attention to reader response is worthy of careful consideration regarding the intricate relationship between the assessment criterion and the reader.

2.2.C Summary

To summarise, Section 2.2 attempts to conceptualise the unintelligibility problem in light of some classic and more recent Western literary theories and/or concepts so as to find a way out of the impasse. During the conceptualisation process, we have developed a better understanding of some key terms in the hypothesis, including **general reader**, **unintelligibility**, **familiarity** and *shiyi*. In particular, having gone through a few approaches, namely Wellek and Warren's intrinsic and extrinsic approaches, Eaglestone's two modes of reading and Abrams's four-element scheme, it is considered a possible solution to resolve the unintelligibility problem by first solving the authorship problematic, which in turn, thanks to Davies's exposition of intentionalism, can be reduced to identifying *shiyi*, the suggested criterion for poetry evaluation in Chapter 1. Barthes's "The Death of the Author" and Kristeva's intertextuality are introduced to illustrate the difficulty encountered should the text be assigned the predominant role in interpretation. Besides, Jauss's Reception Theory is considered verging too much on the reader side, and less successful than other approaches in resolving the authorship problematic. Iser's "the implied reader", by contrast, effects a shift towards the side of the text, producing a more balanced view on the authorship problematic, though his "imagination" lacks theoretical vigour for

¹⁹⁴ In an email dated 26 Jan 2009 to me during our brief e-mail discussion on intrinsic value, Lamarque remarked that "Works of literature have no value in themselves (or intrinsic value) independent of the responses of human beings. [...] I am loathe to abandon the time-honoured view of art being enjoyed 'for its own sake'. I am principally targeting those who promote overtly instrumental values (other than *sui generis* pleasure); those who think that literature is valuable only because it promotes a kind of self-improvement (Nussbaum) or a deeper understanding of human psychology (Freud) or political or ideological change (Marx) or morality or religion or whatever. Some works might have these additional benefits [...] but I think the value of literature 'as literature' doesn't rest on such things. Ultimately it's an aesthetic value." This view, however, doesn't lend much theoretical support to the validity of his intrinsic value.

analysis purposes. Hence, it is suggested to subsume under the analysis of the authorship problematic a more balanced view on the roles of the author, the reader and the text. The authorship problematic, in turn, can be analysed in terms of *shiyi*. Lamarque's account of intrinsic value further confirms the plausibility of adopting a valuation approach in assessment of literature, and in the case of this thesis, of adopting *shiyi* in poetry assessment.

With the single criterion of *shiyi* foremost established, it is possible to apply this criterion to sort out the unintelligibility problem of modern poetry. In other words, the criterion can be used to determine whether a poem is unintelligible because it is profoundly difficult or obscure for a reader to derive *shiyi* from it, or simply because it is lacking in meaningfulness, which supposedly is a necessary condition for *shiyi*,¹⁹⁵ provided that sufficient efforts have been invested in the interpretation process.¹⁹⁶ Since the notion of *shiyi* is for now far from adequately defined for analysis purposes, in the next section a number of possible solutions from other perspectives, which by themselves are insufficient for the purposes of this thesis, will be consulted with a view to substantiating and supplementing this *shiyi*.

2.3 POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE UNINTELLIGIBILITY PROBLEM

The previous section has preliminarily worked out from some classical and more modern approaches a possible yet simplistic model based on *shiyi* (re. the **proposed theory of *shiyi*** as the crux of the hypothesis). Such a new model, however, lacks the operationality required for practical analysis of poetry, and can only be taken as a general direction in identifying suitable theories for further theorisation and necessary enrichment. In the following, a number of fully-fledged approaches, by themselves not sufficient for the purposes of this thesis, will be introduced for scrutiny.

2.3.A Chinese language studies

Of the massive volume of literature on the characteristics of *wenyan* and *baihua*, only those most relevant to poetry composition, and hence interpretation problems

¹⁹⁵ Meaningfulness, which refers to the degree of understanding developed by a reader of a poem, is supposedly a necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition, for *shiyi* derivation, because it is understood intuitively that there is something more in *shiyi* than mere understanding.

¹⁹⁶ This refers again to **Type A unintelligibility** and **Type B unintelligibility** introduced in the hypothesis in Chapter 1.

investigated in this thesis, will be discussed in the following. The differentiation of *wenyan* and *baihua* as illuminated by classic studies, as well as latest research efforts, will also be introduced.

2.3.A.1 James Liu's views on classical Chinese

Closely related to his study of classical poetry, James Liu points out that whereas *wenyan* is a completely uninflected language not burdened with cases, genders, moods, tenses, etc., the syntax of *baihua* has since the May Fourth Movement been imitating inflected languages such as English.¹⁹⁷ The uninflected nature of *wenyan* is a source of both strength and weakness as far as literary expression is concerned: (1) it enables the writer to concentrate on essentials and be as concise as possible, while it also leads easily to ambiguity, so that where *wenyan* gains in concision, it loses in precision, and this gain would be on the whole greater than the loss; (2) the absence of number and the habitual omission of subject are conducive to development of a sense of timelessness and universality; (3) usage of word/character inversions not only promotes greater compression and economy of words, but also helps to achieve variation in rhythm; and (4) the fluidity of “parts of speech” adds to the compactness (in terms of the economy in the use of characters) and vividness of the poem.¹⁹⁸ In summary, since classical Chinese grammar is fluid, a Chinese word cannot be pinned down to a “part of speech”, “gender”, “case”, etc, but is a mobile unit which acts on and reacts with other units in a constant flux.¹⁹⁹ Equipped with such a language, classical Chinese poets could write with the greatest possible conciseness, and at the same time achieve an impersonal and universal quality by dispensing with all accidental trappings.²⁰⁰ This explains why the quintessence of a scene, a mood, a whole experience can be compressed into merely a sequence of some twenty or thirty characters²⁰¹ yet comprehensible to the readers.²⁰² Without the fluidity of grammar

¹⁹⁷ See James Liu 1962, 40. What Liu refers to as “Chinese” is confined to classical Chinese in his study of classical Chinese poetry.

¹⁹⁸ The four points summarise Liu's analysis. See James Liu 1962, 39-46.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 46.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 46-47.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 47. Similarly, Julia Lin remarks that “traditional poets favour the short forms and that some of the best traditional poetry is written in these forms”, and the reason is that “[t]he [Chinese] literary language is unquestionably a perfect means to secure comprehension and concision of form”, for “[adopting this language e]ven connectives, prepositions, auxiliaries, and articles can be dispensed with readily, so that the poet can concentrate on essentials while ridding his verse of irrelevance” (1972, 7).

²⁰² The readers, as a matter of course, refer to those educated ones in pre-modern China who were

characteristic of *wenyan*, it can be argued, according to Liu's views, that a poet writing in *baihua* may not be as effective in compressing his ideas into a poem as one composing in *wenyan*. This clearly upholds economy in language use as a primary criterion in evaluation of a poem, and may suggest a link between this economy and *shiyi*, our established criterion for poetry assessment.

2.3.A.2 Chaofen Sun's views on modern Chinese

Chaofen Sun suggests an interesting aspect of *baihua*, which is the abundance of idioms and sentence-long sayings and proverbs that are commonly used in texts of different genres as an erudite style of writing.²⁰³ A mastery of these idiomatic expressions and skilful use of them in writing, as Sun points out, are much appreciated in a Chinese-speaking community.²⁰⁴ Thereupon, he provides numerous examples to illustrate the idea that many widely-used disyllabic words and four-syllable idiomatic expressions are coined from concepts and/or ideas embraced by influential philosophical traditions and religious practice.²⁰⁵ Sun's idea is particularly relevant to this thesis as it testifies to the validity of the proposed and preferred cultural-literary concept of **Chineseness** (another key term), to be introduced in a later section, in describing the actual nature and/or phenomena of language use. In addition, the idea of a cultural and/or literary language as such may arguably render the distinction between *wenyan* and *baihua*, though still important, as less significant and decisive in analysis of poetry and assessment of *shiyi*.

2.3.A.3 Xu Jinru's views on Chinese poetic language

Xu Jinru²⁰⁶ 徐晉如 observes that adoption of *baihua* in poetry has never seen any success since the ancient time, and criticises Hu Shi's pioneering poetry written in *baihua* as, though not without a bit of poetic flavour (“未嘗不小有詩味”), still plagued by its shallowness and vulgarity.²⁰⁷ According to Xu, only *wenyan* with the requisite conciseness and preciseness can be used to fit in with line structures of

familiar with the literary tradition from which all those illusions in poetry were drawn.

²⁰³ Chaofen Sun 2006, 116.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. On the same page, Sun gives as an example *yu su bu da* 欲速不達, which corresponds to “more haste less speed” in English.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 116.

²⁰⁶ Xu is currently one of the most popular and respected classical poets and professors of Chinese classical literature in mainland China.

²⁰⁷ Xu Jinru 2009, 225.

poetry requiring similar conciseness and preciseness, and hence Hu's failure in composing new poetry.²⁰⁸ He thus further attributes his perceived failure in the works of contemporary poets to their overuse of *baihua*, harshly condemning that such works can never be considered poetry or *ci*-poetry, but merely *lianhua luo* 蓮花落 (i.e. vulgar songs sung by beggars when begging).²⁰⁹ As a traditionalist, Xu views poetry composition solely from the perspective of a classical poet/critic. Regrettably, his criticism regarding the lack of the requisite conciseness and preciseness in *baihua* required for the corresponding line structures of poetry is misplaced, flagrantly neglecting the fact that modern poets are not filling in the forms of *wenyan* with *baihua*; modern poets are at most working according to forms, if any, demonstrably less concise than those of classical poetry. However, his emphasis on conciseness and preciseness, which can be considered a restatement of James Liu's economy, is in line with the traditional view on what criteria a (classical) poem should be judged by. Besides, the actual **vernacular benefit** (our key term) of adopting *baihua* in poetry composition is less than expected according to this view of Xu's which attributes economy to *wenyan* only. Accordingly, vernacular benefit can also be linked to *shiyi* via economy of language use.

2.3.A.4 Other related views on the Chinese (poetic) language

As early as in 1965, Dong Tonghe 董同龢 already pointed out that “in reality, no written language can provide a perfect and thorough record of a spoken language. Besides, it is really difficult to trace the original verbal sound of some characters [as they were spoken for reproduction]”.²¹⁰ This poses a convincing and direct challenge to the validity of the concept of vernacular literature. In addition, many scholars probably regard it as a mistake to refer to *xiandai* Hanyu 現代漢語 (modern Chinese) as simply a language of *baihua*. Wilt Idema and Lloyd Haft, for instance, consider that modern Chinese literature is “predominantly [composed] in the modern standard language, which is relatively close to the modern spoken language, but often it still shows strong *wenyan* influence”.²¹¹ Moreover, Zhang Taozhou 張桃洲 is of the opinion that modern Chinese is “neither *baihua*, nor a westernised language, nor

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 225-226.

²¹⁰ See Dong Tonghe 2001, Preface (dated 1965), 4.

²¹¹ See Idema and Haft 1997, 7, where it is also observed that “down through the centuries *wenyan* poetry absorbed numerous elements from the spoken language”. Although the authors do not aim at identifying a distinct *poetic language*, their observation effectively confirms the possibility of the existence of this poetic language, which is neither pure *wenyan* nor pure *baihua*.

wenyan, but rather a [new] language which came into being integrated with resources from all of these three over time”.²¹² So in the past decade, “modern Chinese” has replaced *baihua*, one of its constituents, to become the focus of attention of literary scholars especially in mainland China. Gao Yu 高玉 even goes so far as to posit that, in addition to being a set of communication tools and symbols, [the modern Chinese] language is itself the subject of thinking, thus it is situated at both the levels of *qi* 器 (the tool) as well as *dao* 道 (the way), and as such, modern Chinese is fundamentally constraining modern [Chinese] literature.²¹³ This seems to assign a degree of prestige to modern Chinese, though Gao fails to see that, as the across-two-level attribute is not restricted to *modern* Chinese, his upholding this attribute for modern Chinese in particular seems at most to achieve for it an otherwise unspectacular equal status with all other languages, including *wenyan*.

As for the use of modern Chinese as the medium of poetry writing, Zhang Taozhou remarks that with characteristics such as *fufan xing* 浮泛性 (superficiality and/or abstractness) and *jiandan hua* 簡單化 (ingenuousness and/or artlessness) bearing a near resemblance to that of [spoken] *baihua*, [written] *baihua* as a constituent of modern Chinese imposes its user some natural difficulties when composing poetry, even though pioneers of new poetry, including Hu Shi, didn’t seem to have taken into account the [natural] distance between the *baihua* language and new poetry, nor did most poets in the embryonic stage of new poetry have paid enough attention to the barrier between ordinary language and poetic language.²¹⁴ From this the distinction between spoken *baihua* and written *baihua* is emphasised, so is the distinction between ordinary language and poetic language.

2.3.A.5 Summary

From James Liu’s analysis, it can be deduced that economy in language use is the primary property in classical poetry that makes it excel. Chaofen Sun’s study, on the other hand, points to the significance of incorporating cultural elements in language use, hence calling for due emphasis on **Chineseness** (re. **Argument 5**). Despising new poetry, Xu Jinru praises one-sidedly classical poetry, especially its conciseness and preciseness in language use, almost tantamount to a restatement of Liu’s economy in language use. As for some recent studies in the mainland, there is a general tendency of separating a proper modern poetic/literary language from

²¹² Zhang Taozhou 2005, 19.

²¹³ Gao 2003, esp. chap.1, 17-29.

²¹⁴ Zhang Taozhou 2005, 21.

baihua, merely one constituent of the former yet considered not a satisfactory device for literary/poetic expression. Such a tendency, as well as Xu's view on conciseness and preciseness, is supportive of our doubt on **vernacular benefit** (re. **Argument 6**). To summarise, the studies presented in this section suggest that a poetic language should take precedence over *baihua* in our analysis of poetry. Sun's study, in particular, draws our attention to the culture/literary tradition factor, or our Chineseness, in this poetic language, which should also benefit from economy in language use (or conciseness and preciseness). The question to further ask is whether these can all be considered in terms of *shiyi* as in the case of Liu's economy in language use.

2.3.B Chinese and Western poetics

In the following, a brief introduction will be provided to Chinese poetics, including traditional poetics and its recent and latest development by Wang Li, Zhu Guangqian 朱光潛, James J.Y. Liu, Wai-lim Yip, Stephen Owen, Pauline Yu and Ming Dong Gu, as well as Western poetics, including some basic concepts of Western poetics, the poetics of Michael Riffaterre, Drew A. Hyland's Plato, and Miall and Kuiken's literariness. Chinese poetics includes mainly traditional schools rather than modern poetics (except those named above), which is considered far from systematic and influential owing to its piecemeal nature. As it has been identified earlier that *shiyi* is the key to resolving the authorship problematic, the approaches and/or theories below are selected for their relevance to theorisation of this notion of *shiyi*.

2.3.B.1 Chinese Poetics

2.3.B.1.1 Traditional Schools

Traditional Chinese poetics has had a long tradition, but it has frequently been subject to criticisms owing to the apparently arbitrary or subjective commentaries on artistic and literary values found in classics of poetics. Such arbitrariness and subjectivity should partly be attributed to the practice of traditional Chinese theorists of literature, whom James Liu considers to be producers of ideas "seldom systematically expounded or explicitly described but often briefly adumbrated or implicitly suggested in scattered writings",²¹⁵ or to what Liu refers to as "the practice on the part of some [traditional] Chinese critics of using highly poetic language to express not so much intellectual concepts as intuitive percepts, which by their very

²¹⁵ James Liu 1975, 4.

nature defy clear definition”.²¹⁶ Such practices, however, may in turn be the natural result of the fact that poets and critics were mostly belonging to the same group of the literati in pre-modern China,²¹⁷ and that among themselves they were sharing a common language which was readily intelligible to each other. In the paragraphs that follow, only the most significant schools and theories amid a vast volume of literature that are less arbitrary, as well as most related to this thesis, especially those concerning the nature and interpretation of poetry, will be introduced.²¹⁸

2.3.B.1.1.1 Dong Zhongshu's *shi wu da gu* 詩無達詁

Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (c.179 - c.104 B.C.) articulated the dictum *shi wu da gu* 詩無達詁 ([*The Book of*] *Poetry* has no thoroughgoing interpretation),²¹⁹ which initially referred specifically to the exegesis of *The Book of Poetry*, but was later extended to all poetry.²²⁰ Such a notion, which has long been elaborated as positing

²¹⁶ Ibid., 6.

²¹⁷ Ming Dong Gu (2003a, 508) rightly suggests that “[t]he major traditional Chinese aestheticians are all poets themselves. [...] Sometimes it is virtually impossible to make a distinction between their creative writings and aesthetic theories.” In fact, traditional Chinese poetics had been an interface between the poets and the critics, though in ancient and pre-modern China poets were usually simultaneously critics, and vice versa.

²¹⁸ Some other traditional concepts of interpretation of poetry from Chinese critics, such as *fu, bi, xing* 賦比興 (i.e. narrative, analogy, association), *shi yan zhi* 詩言志 (i.e. *shi* voices out the thoughts), *shi yuan qing* 詩緣情 (i.e. *shi* comes from emotions), *zhiren lunshi* 知人論世 (i.e. know the person, discuss the background) and *yiyi nizhi* 以意逆志 (i.e. using [readers’] mind to receive the [author’s] intention), will only be covered where necessary as they are either less systematic in themselves or have been incorporated into those introduced in this chapter. Details of the concepts can be found, for instance, in Wang Keping 2008.

²¹⁹ See Dong Zhongshu 2011 for the original sentence in Chinese, which reads “所聞《詩》無達詁，
《易》無達佔，《春秋》無達辭，從變從義，而一以奉人。” (literally, “it is heard that [*The Book of*] *Poetry* has no thoroughgoing interpretation, [*The Book of*] *Change* has no thoroughgoing divination, [and] *Chunqiu* has no thoroughgoing diction, [and whether we] follow the change [in the context or] follow the meaning [of the text], that all [depends on] the human held in high esteem”; alternatively, “從變從義，而一以奉人” can be rendered as “[and whether we] follow the contingencies [in the context or] follow the common sense [as applied to the text], that all [depends on] the heaven held in high esteem”, where “變” is taken to mean “contingencies”, “義” is taken to mean “common sense” and “人” is taken to be “天” (“heaven”), as according to Lai Yanyuan 1984, 81-82).

²²⁰ Ming Dong Gu 2003b, 113.

an openness of a poetical text's interpretation,²²¹ can be considered the beginning of Chinese poetic hermeneutics,²²² and will be dealt with in more detail in a later section. Of note here is that this openness is viewed predominantly from the side of the reader, with the assumption²²³ that there is a *fixed* original meaning for the sacred text concerned.²²⁴

2.3.B.1.1.2 Liu Xie's *yinxu* 隱秀 and *zhiyin* 知音

Of the 50 chapters of Liu Xie's 劉勰 (465-522) *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (*The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*), arguably the most complex and comprehensive work of literary criticism in ancient China, Chapter 40 and Chapter 48,

²²¹ See Zhang Longxi 1983, 75 for the author's view on Shen Deqian's 沈德潛 (1673-1769) interpretation of Dong Zhongshu's *shi wu da gu*.

²²² Owing to its primary focus on the classics, the passage containing *yi yi ni zhi* 以意逆志 in *Mengzi* (《孟子·萬章上》: “故說《詩》者不以文害辭, 不以辭害志; 以意逆志, 是為得之。”), attributed to Mencius (372-289 B.C.) is, on the other hand, considered the beginning of Chinese hermeneutics. See, for instance, a general exposition of his methods in Chun-chieh Huang 2001. Specifically, on p. 15, Huang remarks that Mencius's “methods of interpreting classics [...] have been very influential in the Confucian hermeneutics of classics”. This highlights Mencius's focus on classics as a whole, rather than on *The Book of Poetry* as an anthology of poetic works. Besides, Mencius's concern for recovering the authorial intention (逆志) can supposedly be dealt with by our *shiyi*, and thus will not be particularly addressed in this thesis. N.B.: The text as quoted above from *Mengzi* can be found in Wang Limin 2009, 153.

²²³ See Zhang Longxi 1983, 75.

²²⁴ As pointed out in n.133, this literature review is not intended to produce an accurate historical record of academic scholarship. As such, we are here more concerned with how Dong Zhongshu has been interpreted, rather than what he actually means by his work. The “*yi yi feng ren*” (一以奉人) as quoted in n.219 above can be construed as promoting the reader's role in interpretation, while the “*cong bian cong yi*” (從變從義) also quoted there can be used to support the dichotomy of a “fixed original meaning” and “some contingent meanings”, which is in accord with what appears in Dong Zhongshu 2011, chap. 5, parag. 3, i.e. “《春秋》固有常義, 又有應變。” (literally, [there is in] *Chunqiu* a fixed original meaning, but also some contingent [meaning(s)]). In addition, in parag. 3 just before what is quoted above is a guiding principle of “*de qi chu ze jie shi ye, shi qi chu, ze jie fei ye*” (得其處則皆是也, 失其處, 則皆非也, literally rendered here as “having [catered to the circumstances of] the [current] situation, every [decision made] must be right, [having] neglected [the circumstances of] the [current] situation, every [decision made] must be wrong”), which seems to suggest a fundamental principle of flexibility of interpretation by the reader.

respectively on *yinxiu* 隱秀 (the recondite and the conspicuous²²⁵) and *zhiyin* 知音 (an understanding critic,²²⁶ or literally, the one who understands the music), are most relevant to poetry interpretation.

In Chapter 40, Liu Xie first states that a person's thought can travel to far away, while literary feelings can develop from a source deeply buried.²²⁷ Such a source which is profound permits growth in various directions, just as vigorous root systems support development of conspicuous branches.²²⁸ This contrast and comparison soon bring about the dialectic relationship of the opposite pair of *yin* 隱 and *xiu* 秀 found within a literary composition. According to Liu, in making an analogy to literary composition, "[t]he recondite elements are the weighty ideas beyond the expressions, and the conspicuous the startling excellencies in the piece".²²⁹ Unquestionably, as far as composition is concerned, Liu pays equal attention to both *yin* and *xiu*, almost amounting to comparing them to the external and internal manifestations of the same thing, which reminds us of the above root and branch analogy. However, regarding literary appreciation, Liu is more inclined to favour *yin* than *xiu*, as is evidenced by his saying that "[t]he recondite [...] suggests ideas which are beyond linguistic expression and are comprehended indirectly through abstruse overtones, which unobtrusively reveal hidden beauty".²³⁰ In Yuan Xingpei's 袁行霈 words, Liu's *yin* is identical to *hanxu* 含蓄 (subtle, implicit), one of the key features treasured in [classical] Chinese literature.²³¹ Yuan elaborates that *yin*, or *hanxu*, is not intended to hide [any meaning], but to make it implicit by means of the inspirational and suggestive power of language, through which a reader, with his associations awakened, will be able to appreciate and discover by himself the thought-provoking meaningfulness in a work.²³² To clarify the matter, Liu also remarks that those writers who try to appear deep by being obscure may produce profundity in their work but not the recondite quality.²³³ This comparison of obscure

²²⁵ Translation by Vincent Shih (1983, 415).

²²⁶ Shih 1983, 503.

²²⁷ Ibid., 415.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Yuan 1990, 25.

²³² Ibid. Cf. Gu Sui 2012a, esp. 331, where Gu Sui 顧隨 suggests that the essence of traditional Chinese poetry should be "giving an impression [only] rather than letting it all out" (i.e. "[...] 給印象，又非和盤托出" in original).

²³³ Shih 1983, 415.

and recondite (or Liu's *yin*, or *hanxu*) is considered parallel to our contrast of **unintelligibility** and **subtlety** (both key terms), which underlies the proposed subtlety-unintelligibility continuum (re. **Argument 2**).

In the beginning of Chapter 48, Liu suggests that “[i]t is indeed difficult to find an understanding critic of personal thought”,²³⁴ which highlights the difficulty in interpretation. This is supplemented by his elaboration on the one-sidedness of view as usually held by a reader.²³⁵ Liu's solution is advising a reader of a piece of literature to pay attention to “its genre and style, its rhetoric, its flexible adaptability, its conformity or nonconformity to orthodox principle, its factual and intellectual content, and its musical pattern”.²³⁶ Accordingly, Liu's approach has a text-centred orientation that reminds us of the intrinsic approach elaborated on in Wellek and Warren 1973, but it also calls for some pre-conditions for a reader to first fulfil in order to succeed in interpretation. And owing to an apparent emphasis on the duty of a reader to try his utmost to do the understanding,²³⁷ Liu's approach is considered to be laying a heavy burden on the reader, and even too heavy a burden if he is a **general reader**. As such, Liu's approach can be considered an unsatisfactory version of our general reader argument (re. **Argument 4**).

Taken the two chapters together, Liu's approach fails, or is not meant to clearly demonstrate if the difficult-to-understand pieces are really works of the recondite or subtle that are worthy of the reader's (extra) time, or just profoundly obscure or unintelligibly meaningless writings.

2.3.B.1.1.3 Sikong Tu's *hanxu* 含蓄

It is well-known that Sikong Tu 司空圖 (837-908), the most influential late Tang literary critic, writes *bu zhu yizi, jin de fengliu* 不著一字，盡得風流 (“Without writing a single word, / Completely attain the spirit of it”) in the opening lines of his poem entitled *Hanxu* 含蓄 (Concealed and implied).²³⁸ Seemingly paradoxical, this nevertheless echoes Liu Xie's *yin* (or *hanxu*), and, in Pauline Yu's view, advocates

²³⁴ Ibid., 503.

²³⁵ Ibid., 507.

²³⁶ Ibid., 509.

²³⁷ Liu remarks that “[w]e ought never to blame a work for being too profound, for our failure to understand it is often due to our own lack of experience and knowledge”. See Shih 1983, 509.

²³⁸ See Sikong Tu 1981, 40 for original poem in Chinese, with English translations cited from Pauline Yu 1987, 208.

a subtle mode of presentation, as is confirmed by Sikong's another poem *Shi jing* 實境 (Real worlds), in which he writes *qu yu shen zhi, ji si fei shen* 取語甚直，計思匪深 ("When the words selected are extremely direct, / The thoughts recorded will not be profound").²³⁹ Moreover, in his *Chao yi* 超詣 (Leaping Beyond), Sikong states that *song zhi si zhi, qi sheng yu xi* 誦之思之，其聲愈希 ("Chant them, ponder them-- / Their sounds gradually fade away"), which implies that it is what the words convey, rather than the words themselves, that should linger in the reader's mind.²⁴⁰ This is basically what Yu refers to as Sikong's "poetics of transcendence",²⁴¹ but this poetics is far from any operational mechanism fit for poetry analysis. Compared to Liu Xie's *yin*, which is more concerned with how the artistic and/or poetic effect (comparable to *shiyi*) is achieved, Sikong's *hanxu* is more centred on the effect itself. And Liu Xie's *yin* and Sikong's *hanxu* can be considered as explicating our **subtlety** (key term) in the hypothesis from two different angles. In a rather indirect manner, however, Sikong seems to have intuitively uncovered a link between subtle expression and profound meaning, though without any detailed explanation.

2.3.B.1.1.4 Yan Yu's *yan you jin er yi wu qiong* 言有盡而意無窮

As traditional Chinese poetics par excellence, the system of Yan Yu 嚴羽 (ca. 1198-1241) of Song dynasty has remained influential until today. Once he famously commented that:

“The masters in High Tang only [set foot on where] their interests [lay], so [their presentation was like] fixing a horn on an antelope without ever leaving any distinguishable [artificial] traces.

²³⁹ Pauline Yu 1987, 209. See Sikong Tu 1981, 42 for Chinese original.

²⁴⁰ Pauline Yu 1987, 209. See Sikong Tu 1981, 43 for Chinese original. In a way it echoes one famous text in *Xici* 繫辭 attributed to Confucius, which reads “子曰：‘書不盡言，言不盡意。’然則聖人之意，其不可見乎？” (in Text 12, Section 7 of Upper Volume of *Xici* 繫辭上卷七之十二, literally rendered here as “Confucius: Writing cannot exhaust what is spoken, [and] speech cannot exhaust what is meant. As such, isn't it the case that it is impossible to understand the intention of a sage? [punctuation marks added]), in Kong 1997, 82. Focusing on the interpretation of classics rather than poetics, the *Xici* text points to the dual characteristics of sufficiency/insufficiency of language, and may as well reveal the paradox of a sacred text's having varied interpretations owing to the inferior position of its readers, and hence a lack of authority among them. Cf. Zhang Longxi 1983, esp. 72-73 and 76, for the author's elaboration on the limitations and suggestiveness of language, which are comparable to the dual characteristics of language mentioned above.

²⁴¹ Pauline Yu 1987, 209.

Therefore, the best part [of their works] is exquisite yet most transparent, which cannot be closely imitated, just like the sound in the air, the colour of an image, the moon in the water, or the image on the mirror, but which is endowed with endless overtones generated by a limited number of words.”²⁴²

This in fact has ignited and fuelled generations of poets’ and writers’ passions for reaching out to attain the artistic state only achievable by *yan you jin er yi wu qiong* 言有盡而意無窮 (maximum significance from limited words). It is actually Yan’s appeal to poets for getting rid of all the burdens and obstacles of language from their poems in order to achieve a preferred artistic state, because poetry is more concerned with the emotions embodied than with the language of embodiment.²⁴³ Literally, his saying also pushes the economy in language use to the extreme, far exceeding what is implied by Liu Xie’s *yin* and Sikong Tu’s *hanxu*. The supposedly rich endowment of meaning within a combination of limited words has necessitated a meticulous interpretation process to recover what is originally intended and actually expressed by the author/poet. But on the other hand, failure in discovering and/or recovering any significance in a poem could mean either an unsuccessful reader (i.e. failure in appreciating **subtlety**) or an unsuccessful poem (i.e. failure due to **unintelligibility**), just that Yan Yu’s theory does not provide any hint as to how a distinction can be made between the two.

2.3.B.1.1.5 Wang Fuzhi’s *qingjing jiaorong* 情景交融

Most notably, Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692), the great philosopher and literary theorist, remarks in his *Jiangzhai shihua* 薑齋詩話 (Jiangzhai’s [name of his study] Poetry Talks) that:

“Emotion and scene are different names given to a whole that cannot be separated into two. The wholeness is most complete in the best of poetry. For good poetry, there is a scene in emotion, or emotion in a scene.”²⁴⁴

²⁴² See Yan 1981, 688 for the original in Chinese, which reads “盛唐諸人，惟在興趣；羚羊掛角，無跡可求。故其妙處，透徹玲瓏，不可湊泊。如空中之音，相中之色，水中之月，鏡中之象，言有盡而意無窮。”

²⁴³ See Wang Shuzhen 2010, 293.

²⁴⁴ See Siu-kit Wong 1987, 182 for the original in Chinese, which reads “情景名為二，而實不可離。神於詩者，妙合無垠。巧者則有情中景，景中情。” For comparison and/or reference, the translation

This can arguably be considered the prelude to or predecessor of some later theories emphasising the significance of the “world”, if the “scene in emotion” (*qing zhong jing* 情中景) or the “emotion in a scene” (*jing zhong qing* 景中情) is interpreted as a world of poem or text. Besides, the “scene in emotion” or the “emotion in a scene” thus interpreted can make a better sense from the (un)familiarity perspective in terms of our proposed subtlety-unintelligibility continuum (re. **Argument 2**), which is intended to clarify the mechanism of creation of *shiyi* through the concept of **subtlety**.

2.3.B.1.1.6 Ye Xie’s *yan zai ci er yi zai bi* 言在此而意在彼

Ye Xie 葉燮 (1627-1703), one most famous and influential early Qing literary critic, has suggested that:

“Where poetry reaches the utmost, its marvelousness lies in an endless concealed implication that conveys thoughts with a subtle vastness. It lodges [meaning] between the sayable and the unsayable; what it points to rests where the explicable and the inexplicable meet. The words are here and the meaning there.”²⁴⁵

By *yan zai ci er yi zai bi* 言在此而意在彼 (the words are here and the meaning there), it seems the words and the meaning are opposed to each other, though there cannot be one without the other. Actually, words are the sayable, and the unsayable the implicit, or hidden, meaning conveyed through **subtlety**. The marvelousness is built on the unsayable, or the successful use of the unsayable in pinning down the inexplicable, as it is the explicable that can be explicated by the sayable in words literally. Although it is impossible to render the inexplicable in words, the inexplicable is not totally unknown, for it can be made known to a degree through subtlety, or the interaction between the sayable and the unsayable. This interpretation of Ye Xie’s *hanxu* 含蓄, also rendered here as subtlety, in terms of his

provided by Wong on 85 reads “The visual experience and the emotional experience are separate entities only in name; in reality they are inseparable. In inspired poetry they amalgamate and lose their separate identities. Even in poetry that is ingenious without being inspired, the visual experience exists in the emotional experience, and the emotional experience exists in the visual experience.”

²⁴⁵ English translation cited from Pauline Yu 1987, 210. The original in Chinese, which reads “詩之至處，妙在含蓄無垠，思致微渺，其寄託在可言不可言之間，其指歸在可解不可解之會，言在此而意在彼”，is found in Ye Xie 2003, 57.

sayable and unsayable and explicable and inexplicable, has indeed turned what is obscure and unsayable in his paragraph into the sayable, and it is possible to apply this to formulation of a proposed theory of *shiyi*, something (much) more than what is expressed literally. In itself, Xie's *hanxu* is however quite obscure a concept as compared to other notions of *hanxu* introduced earlier.

2.3.B.1.1.7 *Wen yi zai dao* 文以載道

The concept of *wen yi zai dao* 文以載道 (literature is a vehicle for conveying the *Dao* (Way))²⁴⁶ as in the classical tradition is scrupulously examined in a classic article by Chow Tse-Tsung.²⁴⁷ Through an exhaustive introduction to the Confucian, Daoist, Mohist and Legalist traditions up to the finest details of etymology, Chow manages to clarify the relationship between *wen* 文 and *dao* 道 (or his *tao*). In particular, he highlights two traditional perspectives of the humanists and the naturalists from which the relationship between *wen* and *dao* is viewed. As he suggests, as early as the late Zhou period, the majority of humanist thinkers, such as the Confucianists, Mohists, and Legalists, “believed literature was a means for conveying the *Tao*”, though some of them, especially the Confucianists, while recognising literary embellishment as a necessity for effective exposition of the *Tao*, often warned against excessive application of it.²⁴⁸ On the other side, as naturalists, the Taoists are considered to have taken a “negative, nihilist view” leading to their refusal to believe that literature could convey the *Tao*, which position “might have also freed literature from moral and didactic bondage for pure esthetic writing”; and “their opposition to verbosity and their belief in the oneness of the writer and nature might have reflected in altered form the earlier numerological tradition of *wen* which emphasized identification with reality”.²⁴⁹ Such dual perspectives, which in essence purport, paradoxically, the indispensability and inadequacy of *wen* as the medium of manifestation of the *dao*, as well as the necessity of restrained use in literary

²⁴⁶ *Wen yi zai dao* has been variously attributed to scholars and/or philosophers, including Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073) of the Song dynasty, as in his “Wenci” in *Tong Shu* 通書·文辭 (“On Writing” in the *Book of Thoroughness*), where it is exactly stated that “literature is a vehicle for conveying the *Dao*. When a well-decorated car is not in use, what is left is just an empty car with useless decoration” (文所以載道也。輪轅飾而人弗庸，徒飾也，況虛車乎。). See Zhou 1937, 180 for the original in Chinese, with my punctuation marks added in the quote.

²⁴⁷ Chow Tse-Tsung 1979, 3-29.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 28.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

embellishment and verbosity,²⁵⁰ are of particular interest to this thesis, which strives to provide a definition of *shiyi* that is thus far considered to be linked to conceptualisation of **familiarity**, economy in language use, **general reader**, **subtlety**, **Chineseness** and **vernacular benefit**, but yet far from clearly articulated. *Wen yi zai dao*, in contrast, directs our attention to the function of literature or poetry, or to how literature in general, and poetry in particular, is to function fundamentally.²⁵¹ Such function of *zai dao* is considered to be conveying truth to the reader through his reading of the literary text or poem, which can well be incorporated into the definition of *shiyi*.²⁵²

2.3.B.1.1.8 Summary

From the above introduction, a few concepts from the tradition can be identified for further elaboration, incorporation and theorisation. **Openness**, as initiated by Dong Zhongshu's *shi wu da gu*, is more akin to a reader-centred approach as it is construed. **Suggestiveness**, as promulgated by Liu Xie in terms of his *yinxu*, developed by Sikong Tu's *hanxu*, expounded by Yan Yu's *yan you jin er yi wu qiong*, and explored by Ye Xie's *yan zai ci er yi zai bi*, is more relevant to the creation of *shiyi*, and is also related to Chow Tse-Tsung's elaborated *wen yi zai dao* as far as exposition of truth is concerned. Such exposition of **truth**, in turn, is considered the focus of Sikong Tu's "poetics of transcendence" and Ye Xie's sayable/unsayable and explicable/inexplicable interplay.²⁵³ In addition, **economy** in language use, as

²⁵⁰ Another slightly different version of such dual perspectives is offered by Pauline Yu, who suggests that "[e]xpression of linguistic inadequacy [sic] were commonplaces in the Chinese philosophical tradition" but "later critics [those after Lu Ji 陸機 (261-303), a writer and literary critic of Eastern Wu 東吳 during the Three Kingdoms period] transformed this potential inadequacy [sic] into a positive transcendence of the limitations of language" (1987, 206).

²⁵¹ This is similar to giving literature and/or poetry a functional definition.

²⁵² A note should be made here concerning the relationship between *wen yi zai dao* 文以載道 and *shi yi yan zhi* 詩以言志 (poetry is for delivery of aspiration, as in "Xianggong Ershiqinian" 襄公二十七年 (The 27th year of Duke Xiang [of Lu] [546 BCE]), in Li Xueqin 1999a, 1064, or 詩言志, as in "詩言志, 歌永言" in "Shundian" 舜典 (Canon of Emperor Shun), in Li Xueqin 1999b, 79). Here, Qian Zhongshu (2002b, 4) is right to point out that in the old Chinese tradition, *wen yi zai dao* and *shi yi yan zhi* are not used for defining literature, but rather for delimiting the functions of different genres. However, insofar as this thesis is concerned with *shiyi*, *wen yi zai dao*, which is considered a more encompassing concept, is adopted for dealing with literature in general, while other concepts as introduced elsewhere in this section are analysed in particular for their relevance to poetry.

²⁵³ This, as well as Yan Yu's *yan you jin er yi wu qiong* and Chow Tse-Tsung's *wen yi zai dao*, can be

promoted by Yan Yu's *yan you jin er yi wu qiong*, and supported by Chow's *wen yi zai dao*, is generally considered a guiding principle for differentiating the good poetry from the bad. **General reader**, as suggested in the hypothesis and preferable to Liu Xie's *zhiyin*, is in a way narrowing or qualifying the openness concept by means of applying on the reader some conditions (e.g. literary knowledge) which are known to and shared by the author. **World**, as expounded by Wang Fuzhi's *qingjing jiaorong*, is also related to *shiyi* in terms of how it can be created. If these concepts can find their (near) equivalents in modern poetics, their continued relevance is then recognised, and their worthiness to theorisation in this thesis is confirmed. Another point worthy of attention is, when discussing Yan Yu's *yan you jin er yi wu qiong*, that failure in discovering and/or recovering any significance in a poem could mean either an unsuccessful reader (i.e. failure in appreciating **subtlety** or overcoming our Type B **unintelligibility**) or an unsuccessful poem (i.e. failure due to unmeaningfulness, or our Type A **unintelligibility**), just that Yan Yu's theory does not provide much hint as to how a distinction can be made between the two. This easily confused distinction between Type A and Type B unintelligibility, or rather failure in appreciating the distinction, can be considered a major reason behind many interpretation problems of modern poetry. Thus, there must be in place a mechanism in the proposed theory through which this distinction can be made manifest.

2.3.B.1.2 Modern Development

Studies of Chinese poetry have taken two major routes in the 20th century and beyond, one following the traditional method of close reading²⁵⁴ leading to apparently arbitrary or subjective commentaries on artistic and literary values,²⁵⁵ the other adopting Western theories to revitalise past research efforts or reassess past findings in a seemingly systematic manner.²⁵⁶ Of the two routes, the latter has soon

considered as representing a variety of approaches supporting the traditional, dichotomous views on language use, i.e. *yan ke jin yi* 言可盡意 (meanings can be fully expressed by language) and *yan bu jin yi* 言不盡意 (meanings cannot be fully expressed by language). See Zhang and Li 2012, 9-12 for more detail on these two major views. N.B.: Elaboration on such dichotomous views through locating similar and related approaches in the tradition supports our approach of defining *shiyi* through identifying *shiyi*'s similar and related concepts in the Chinese and Western traditions for theorisation.

²⁵⁴ This refers to philology or exegesis in the Chinese tradition.

²⁵⁵ Such arbitrariness should partly be attributed to the practice of traditional Chinese theorists and critics of literature, as suggested earlier in n.215 and n.216.

²⁵⁶ Probably a line can roughly be drawn between twentieth-century Chinese theories and those before them, as well as studies based on such twentieth-century theories and those based on earlier theories.

become predominant, even incorporating the essence of the former as stepping stones for paving the way for further advancement.²⁵⁷ Notwithstanding this, modern development is not necessarily to be equated with sheer westernisation in Chinese studies; rather, some scholars consider that it is exactly following the tradition to enliven modern Chinese studies as many Western theories can find their mirror images in traditional studies.²⁵⁸ Whether this view is warranted or not, the possibility of convenient and comfortable appropriation and/or borrowing of Western theories in the study of Chinese poetry has been opened up. The theories surveyed in the following, for instance, should best be regarded as instances of syncretism of Chinese and Western theories.

It should be noted, however, that compared to their predecessors in the early to mid 20th century, most contemporary scholars of Chinese poetry concentrate their efforts on particular poets, poetry of specific periods or certain topics of interest in poetics, instead of poetics at large.²⁵⁹ Such phenomena can be regarded as the direct result of diversification of academic efforts to achieve specialisation as favoured in

As James Liu (1975, 5) has pointed out, twentieth-century Chinese theories, except those held by purely traditionalist critics, “[...] have been dominated by one sort of Western influence or another, be it Romanticist, Symbolist, or Marxist, and do not possess the same kind of value and interest as do traditional Chinese theories, which constitute a largely independent source of critical ideas”. Cf. Yang Xiaoshan 1996, 1 where the author has singled out three forms of *comparative* literature involving the Chinese tradition, the third one being the use of Western critical theories and methodologies to (re)interpret the Chinese texts.

²⁵⁷ Though more regarded as a traditional scholar, Qian Zhongshu, among others, may be considered one who has successfully merged the best of the two cultures in this respect. Qian 1998 represents part of Qian’s efforts in the direction, and Ji 2011 provides a detailed account of Qian’s rewarding encounters with various Western disciplines.

²⁵⁸ Based on her observation that “[e]xpressions of criticism on literature, particularly poetry, are to be found in the works of countless literary figures in China for the past two thousand years, as well as criticisms of and commentaries on the works of others”, Adele Austin Rickett suggests quite boldly that “[i]mpressionists, formalists, symbolists and many others can find their counterparts in China. Wordsworth’s ‘Spontaneous overflow’, would find ready acceptance among many Chinese critics in past ages.” (1977, ix.)

²⁵⁹ For instance, Yeh 1991, among others, represents the author’s scholarly efforts in the investigation of modern Chinese poetry *in its historical context*. Yeh states on p. 2 that one aim of her book is “to understand the unique, revolutionary nature of modern Chinese poetry by exploring how it is fundamentally distinct from the classical norm in key respects, ranging from its theoretical conceptions to actual expressions”.

the modern academic world.

2.3.B.1.2.1 Wang Li's versification

Drawing on the findings of scholars in Qing dynasty, Wang Li's *Han yu shi lü xue* 漢語詩律學 (On the Versification of the Chinese Language)²⁶⁰ presents his own research efforts in Western linguistics, and is regarded as a pioneering work in generalising the versification rules of Chinese *shi*, *ci* and *qu*.²⁶¹ Of interest to this thesis is Chapter 5, which deals with *baihua* poetry and Westernised poetry. With its emphasis placed on how Western forms were borrowed, however, the chapter serves more to record the experimentation of early modern poets but not to account for *shiyi* (or any similar or related concept), its creation in poetry, as well as its relationship with forms and/or versification. Besides, his elaborate and detailed description of versification from classical poetry to modern poetry may suggest paradoxically that among all factors it is **familiarity** of forms and **prosodic devices** (re. **Argument 3**) that matters, albeit the fact that forms and prosodic devices had basically been changed from the classical ones to the Western ones.

2.3.B.1.2.2 Zhu Guangqian's "world"

Zhu's *Shi lun* 詩論 (On Poetry)²⁶² is a comprehensive study of classical Chinese poetry and poetics built on his earlier work, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (The Psychology of Literature and Art) first published in 1936. Borrowing from the West theories on intuition, transference, imitation, etc, Zhu attempts to create his own poetics based on the traditional concept of *qingjing jiaorong* 情景交融 (synthesis of "emotion" and "scene") with reference to Wang Guowei's exploration of *jingjie* in his *Renjian cihua*. Zhu suggests that every poem has its unique world, which, owing to the fact that a poet will select, choose, and tailor-make this world [from what he knows of the real world], should be *buji buli* 不即不離 with the real world (i.e. neither too close to nor too distant from it).²⁶³ And the marvelousness (*miaochu* 妙

²⁶⁰ Wang Li 2002. Actually, Wang goes into the details of versification to such an extent that the book is more like a manual of poetry composition than a book on poetics.

²⁶¹ Li Fei 2008, 47. N.B.: Wang Li remarks that his *shi lü xue* 詩律學 is roughly equivalent to "versification" in English (2002, 1), and hence the translation of the title adopted in the thesis, in contrast to Li Fei's "Poesy Rhythm".

²⁶² Zhu 1987. Zhu's monograph was first published in 1943, then its revised edition in 1948, and another revised version in 1984. See "Introduction to Vol. 3", Zhu 1987.

²⁶³ Zhu 1987, 49.

處) of this world of poetry falls exactly on this *buji buli*.²⁶⁴ This, according to our earlier expositions, can be translated into a version of Sikong Tu's "poetics of transcendence" or Ye Xie's sayable/unsayable and explicable/inexplicable interplay: all these theories are doing their poetics along the knowledge boundary, with a view to crossing it yet unable to travel too far away from where they originally were. Zhu's contribution is his unique emphasis on *buji buli*, which affirms an insuperability of the new world of poetry from the original real world. This insuperability agrees with the notion of the flexibility of a **Micro/micro-context** (key term) in expanding through incorporating new constituents from the **Macro/macro-context** (key term) (re. **Argument 1**). However, Zhu, as with his predecessors, has not tried to clearly define his criterion, which may otherwise be used in poetry analysis systematically.

2.3.B.1.2.3 James Liu's "world"

With his ambition best described as to construct a theoretical framework to encompass not only Chinese literature but also literature of other countries,²⁶⁵ James Liu is among those who have attempted to develop traditional theories into their new heights. In line with traditional Chinese views on the "world in poetry", which defined this world as consisting of "emotion" (*qing* 情) and "scene" (*jing* 景), Liu's proposed theory re-defines this world as a synthesis of the external and internal aspects of life, i.e. a reflection of the poet's external environment and an expression of his internal consciousness.²⁶⁶ In an earlier article of his, Liu attributes the origin of his "world" to Wang Guowei's exploration of *jingjie* 境界 (which Liu renders exactly as "world"), explaining that it was Wang who first applied "the term *systematically* [italic original] to the criticism of poetry" and gave the term more or less a definition:

"The 'world' does not only refer to scenes and objects; joy, anger, sadness, and happiness also form a 'world' in the human heart. Therefore, poetry that can describe true scenes and true emotions may be said to 'have a world'; otherwise it may be said 'not to have a world'."²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ See James Liu 1975, 140.

²⁶⁶ James Liu 1962, 94 and 96.

²⁶⁷ See James Liu 1956, 280, where Wang's original words from his *Renjian cihua* 人間詞話 were quoted as "境非獨調景物也。喜怒哀樂亦人心中之一境界。故能寫真景物真感情者，謂之有境界。否則謂之無境界。".

It is emphasised here that ‘*jing*’ is used to include not only natural scenery but any physical object, and that this *jing* in a poem need not be actual, as the actual scene and the imaginary scene often merge into each other in a poem.

Following that account of *jing*, Liu elaborates that every poem embodies a world of its own, be it great or small, remote or familiar, and as long as it is genuine, it will transport us into its special world, enabling us to see certain things, feel certain emotions, ponder on certain aspects of life and experience in our imagination a state of being which we may or may not have known in real life. Rather than a dead record of experience, a poem is a living process of blending a past experience with the present experience of writing and reading. In this way, the original experience of the poet is transformed into something new, i.e. the poem, and when the reader reads it, the process is repeated in his mind, and the world of the poem is re-created.²⁶⁸ Moreover, during the transformation of the original experience, the poet is searching for the right words, thus an exploration of the possibilities of language is proceeding at the same time. Liu therefore suggests that poetry is a double exploration of worlds and languages, and the poet’s task is “to find adequate words for new worlds of experience and to find new words for old familiar worlds”.²⁶⁹ He further claims that great²⁷⁰ poetry either makes us experience new worlds, or makes us experience old worlds in a new way, and it is in this way that great poetry is not only an expression of reality but an extension to it.²⁷¹ Besides, since great poetry creates new worlds of experience, it necessarily involves hitherto undiscovered ways of using language, with new expressions, new combinations of sense and sound, new patterns of words, images, symbols and associations.²⁷² As Liu suggests, great poetry leads us into new worlds and therefore enlarges our sensibility, while lesser poetry

²⁶⁸ James Liu 1962, 96.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 96-97.

²⁷⁰ Liu’s use of words such as “great” in this context can be quite abstract and falls short of meeting the analytic requirement that is central to this thesis.

²⁷¹ James Liu 1962, 98-99. Liu accordingly propounds that “[t]he supreme poet of a language, like Shakespeare or Tu Fu [i.e. Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770)], not only explores more widely and deeply into worlds of human experience but extends the territory of that language more than any other poet”, and that “[m]inor poets may either explore human experience to a greater extent than language, like, say, Wordsworth or Po Chü-I [i.e. Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846)], or do the reverse, like for instance Li Shang-yin [i.e. Li Shangyin 李商隱 (ca. 812/813-858)] or Mallarmé” (1963, 100).

²⁷² Ibid., 99-100.

re-creates for us familiar worlds and therefore only confirms our own experience.²⁷³ Later, in revising Wang Guowei's and his own earlier views, Liu succinctly adds that the created world of every genuine literary work of art actually constitutes an extension to reality.²⁷⁴ That is why he holds that the primary artistic function of literature is mainly twofold: extension of reality through the writer's creation and the reader's re-creation of imaginary worlds, and satisfaction of the creative impulse for both parties.²⁷⁵ Except for covering both the author and the reader, Liu's elaboration, compared to efforts made by his predecessors including Zhu Guangqian, thus demonstrates a higher degree of theoretical clarity with regard to how the knowledge boundary can be trespassed. Besides, his claim of extension of reality in fact highlights the inadequacy of having "**truth**" in the definition of *shiyi*, because if a micro-context (or what is in one's mind) is the very source of any literary and/or poetic world, the imaginary scene that can appear in such a world cannot be classified as truth. Accordingly, the "truth" may well be relaxed to "**truthfulness**".²⁷⁶

Nevertheless, although central to his theory, Liu's notion of the "world" has not been exactly explicated so as to render it operational in poetry analysis. He does not seem to have related his "world" to *shiyi* (or any similar concept) in a systematic manner, nor has he singled out *shiyi* (or any similar concept) as a criterion for poetic analysis. He has also neglected to illuminate the intricate relationship between the "double exploration of worlds and languages". Tracing his "world" to Wang Guowei's *jingjie*, Liu has further complicated the matter without achieving any clarification purposes as Wang's poetics is as variedly interpreted as it is greatly influential.²⁷⁷ Aside from this, Liu's saying of enlarging of "sensibility", which seems to be similar to yet also contrasted with "experiences", is nothing less than

²⁷³ Ibid., 98-99.

²⁷⁴ James Liu 1977, 8.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 7.

²⁷⁶ It is long since William James (1842-1910) first, probably indirectly, voiced the distinction between truth and truthfulness. James does not disagree that truth "is a property of certain of our ideas. It means their 'agreement' [...] with 'reality'" (1907, 141). He also suggested that there is "the great assumption of the intellectualists [...] that truth means essentially an inert static relation" because "[w]hen you've got your true idea of anything, there's an end of the matter" (ibid., 142). "Epistemologically you are in equilibrium" is what he aptly put it. (Ibid.) The notion of truthfulness, considered a non-static relation, will be introduced in the following where appropriate.

²⁷⁷ Chang Wenchang 常文昌, for instance, remarks that Wang's *ge yu bu ge* 隔與不隔 (literally, partitioned and non-partitioned), which is based on his *jingjie*, was developed through examination of literary works rather than explicated in a clear and critical manner (2004, 23).

vague. If such notions of Liu's as "world" and "sensitivity"/"experiences" have to be of real practical use to analysis, they must first be explicated in more concrete terms or properly defined.²⁷⁸

As for his poetic effect, for which a clear definition has not been given, Liu attaches great importance to the use of allusions as a poetic device in producing poetic effect or serving other practical purposes.²⁷⁹ First, allusions can be used as an economical means of presenting a situation, i.e. acting as a shorthand expression to communicate to the readers certain facts which would otherwise require explanation and take up space. Second, allusions, whether used to reveal an analogy or highlight a contrast, add the authority of past experience to the present occasion and hence strengthen the poetic effect. Third, they can build up an extra dimension of meaning and extend the significance of the present context by calling up a chain of associations with the past. Fourth, allusions afford a way of avoiding scandal or prosecution in cases where a clandestine love affair is involved or when political/personal satire is intended.²⁸⁰ Unfortunately, aside from the fourth use of allusions, which in any case may not be directly related to poetic effect, Liu's ideas on the other three do not differ too much from, nor do they represent any significant improvement on, the traditional view of "maximum significance from limited words" as introduced earlier.

Liu's theory based on his "world", in contrast, provides a modern and more concrete version of synthesis of "emotion" and "scene", though he is still a step away from spelling out the link between this "world" (or the poetic world/context formed according to the poem concerned and based on the **Micro/micro-context**) and his poetic effect (or its similar concept *shiyi*), as well as how the blending of a past experience with the present experience of writing and reading, or the unfamiliar with the familiar, can actually occur (say in terms of concepts such as **Micro/micro-context** and **Macro/macro-context**). His ideas, however, will become valuable resources for formulation of an operational mechanism for poetry analysis in this thesis.

²⁷⁸ As it will be suggested and shown shortly, Liu's "world" can be explicated in cognitive terms according to cognitive linguistics, and his "sensitivity"/"experiences" can be understood in terms of "truthfulness".

²⁷⁹ James Liu 1962, 131-132 and 135-136. In the context of p. 135, his "poetic effect", which is seldom used elsewhere in his book in any technical sense, should be read as "effect that a poem should be able to achieve". Accordingly, his poetic effect is quite similar to *shiyi*.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 132 and 135-136.

2.3.B.1.2.4 Wai-lim Yip's "Chinese Theory of Reading"

In his "‘Secret Echoes and Complementary Correspondences’ -- A Chinese Theory of Reading",²⁸¹ Yip expounds his theory of reading, which centres on the differentiation between internal correspondence and external correspondence, as well as identification of the consciousness of an author while he is composing.²⁸² By internal correspondence, Yip means "echoes within the author's own corpus of works", either those within a specific text or a group of texts, or those in the author's other writings; by external correspondences, he means "voices of other people evoked by the text".²⁸³ All such voices from different directions before the poet's time, Yip suggests, come to dominate the poet's consciousness and, in turn, the reader's, which is also subjected to voices after the poet's time.²⁸⁴ Yip holds that the reading experience of a reader is also that of the poet, because the latter actually becomes his own reader during the process of writing.²⁸⁵ This differentiates Yip's model from that of Kristeva's intertextuality, which does not reserve a place for the speaking subject, and from our deliberations on the authorship problematic as according to Barthes's views, which effectually have the author's role reduced to mere insignificance.²⁸⁶ If, as explained earlier, Kristeva's and Barthes's approaches both suffer from an unnecessary skewness towards only one of the stakeholders in solving the authorship problematic (with Kristeva singling out the text and Barthes concentrating on the reader), then Yip apparently provides a more balanced approach to the interpretation problem of our concern through integrating the reading experience of a reader and an author, as well as pinpointing the openness of a poem as

²⁸¹ In Yip 1993, 138-162. This is elaboration on and development from Liu Xie's concept of *mixiang bangtong* 祕響傍通 (i.e. Yip's "Secret Echoes and Complementary Correspondences") in chap. 40 on *yinxu* in his *Wenxin diaolong*. Vincent Shih has, by contrast, quite literally translated *mixiang bangtong* as "are comprehended indirectly through abstruse overtones" (1983, 415).

²⁸² Yip 1993, 138-162, and esp. 145-146.

²⁸³ Ibid., 145.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 143. Yip elaborates on his ideas through analysis of Sikong Tu's *Ershisi shipin*.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 138.

²⁸⁶ Yip also mentions Kristeva and Barthes at nearly the end in his chapter: Kristeva is mentioned because he has quoted her writing on Bakhtin, to whom Yip apparently attributes the notion of intertextuality, and Barthes is mentioned as yet another voice suggesting the existence of different voices for reading of a text (1993, 160-161). It is noted that while quoting the two authors as a means of indirectly supporting his views, Yip does not pay adequate attention to the differences between Kristeva's, Barthes's and his own approach.

a text to various different voices.²⁸⁷ That is why Yip suggests that “[w]hat we read is not one poem but a fabric of many poems, the concerto and symphony comprised of many other poems and voices”.²⁸⁸ The implication of Yip’s model is the resulting reinforcement of a literary tradition or canon by both authors and readers, whose reading experience is integrated and in a way regurgitated into the writing process through reader expectations. According to the proposed vocabulary in this thesis, such mechanism can best be expressed in terms of **familiarity**, which as a quality and/or attribute can contribute to reducing **unintelligibility** of a poem. (Re. **Argument 2**)

Yip’s definition of internal correspondence (i.e. echoes within the author’s own corpus of works) is, however, not making too much contribution as far as this thesis is concerned. Such demarcation may render the otherwise clear-cut divide laid down by the text concept a blurred one, not helping much as regards how to better determine the significance as attached to those within the corpus but other than the text, as compared to those out of this corpus, which he defined as voices producing external correspondence. In a nutshell, Yip’s model does not give any hint to the question of comparative relevance of different voices to the interpretation of a text. In contrast, the pair of **internal contextualisation** and **external contextualisation** place emphasis on the boundary between the **micro-context** and the **macro-context**, which is a more satisfactory account of how interpretation really takes place from a reader’s perspective. (Re. **Argument 1**)

2.3.B.1.2.5 Stephen Owen’s *zhiyin*

Owen introduces and enlivens the traditional concept of *zhiyin* 知音 as perceived by him as a good reader of classical Chinese poetry who could take advantage of what he calls “lore” in the understanding of a poem.²⁸⁹ His examples of lore include some symbols such as “peach blossoms”, which his good reader would associate with the story of “Peach Blossom Spring”, and “pine”, which the reader would see as the emblem of moral integrity and solitary life.²⁹⁰ His idea of lore is

²⁸⁷ See *ibid.*, 149, where Yip, in particular, remarks that “[w]ords and phrases in a poem are springboards into larger spaces and deeper times. A poem is [thus] never locked within a text but is a conversation across historical space and time.”

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 146.

²⁸⁹ Owen 1990, 295 and 304.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 304. On the same page, Owen describes “Peach Blossom Spring” as telling the story of a fisherman who “followed a trail of peach blossoms deep into the mountains where he found a village

quite similar to that of **Chineseness** (re. **Argument 5**), and his idea of *zhiyin* subsumable to that of the **general reader** (re. **Argument 4**). However, Owen has not attempted to properly define, elaborate and theorise on his concepts, and his analysis of poems by means of these concepts is therefore impressionistic rather than systematic.²⁹¹ In comparison, Adele Austin Rickett suggests that there is “the assumption on the part of a Chinese critic that his reader knows what is in his mind and that a few words are therefore all that are needed to enlighten the reader”, and that no wonder “[p]ithy comments, arbitrary judgements, poetic expressions using the vaguest, most mystical, highly ornate and flowery language are the commonplace in this esoteric field”.²⁹² This suggestion by Rickett, though came earlier than Owen’s *zhiyin*, seems a more concrete elaboration of *zhiyin* and may as well open up a discourse on the assumed comparable learnedness between the writer and reader in traditional China, both immersed in the literary tradition. Thus, *zhiyin* can readily be used to sum up the author-reader interaction and relationship that Wai-lim Yip argues for, as well as to account for the concept of the general reader as posited in this thesis. In addition, it is only logical to also relate this *zhiyin* to a reader’s **familiarity** with the literary tradition or **Chineseness**, or to the **macro-context**, as *zhiyin*, though a concept lacking in theoretical clarity, can be considered a variation of the **general reader**. Comparatively speaking, therefore, the general reader is considered a preferable concept for use in poetry analysis.

2.3.B.1.2.6 Pauline Yu’s Chinese imagery

As Pauline Yu points out, poetic imagery has been the centre of Chinese critical attention from early times,²⁹³ and two important assumptions about imagery [in classical poetry] which came from the *Classic of Poetry* [i.e. *The Book of Poetry*] and its commentary literature, and as developed and refined in subsequent centuries of poetic practice and criticism, are (1) that on “the analogical, meaning-conveying properties of the images” and the larger significance as embodied and evoked by concrete phenomena; and (2) that on the belief that the poem as a whole constitutes “an historical or autobiographical document” and that its images are drawn from the

that had remained cut off from the outside world for centuries.” This apparently is the famous story “Tao Hua Yuan ji” 桃花源記 written by Tao Qian 陶潛 (or Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, 365-427), one of the most influential pre-Tang dynasty Chinese poets.

²⁹¹ See, for instance, Owen 1990, 303-306 for his commentary on Li Bai’s “Fang Daitian Shan daoshi buyu” 訪戴天山道士不遇 (Visiting the recluse on Mount Daitian and not finding him in).

²⁹² Rickett 1977, p. ix.

²⁹³ Pauline Yu 1987, 37.

author's lived experience.²⁹⁴ Such, in gist, an assumed association between the imagery in a poem (and what a reader may draw from it) and the original message entrusted by the poet to the words therein, remarks Yu, is what the Chinese reader believes to be the case.²⁹⁵ This is in line with the above-mentioned tradition of *wen yi zai dao* as elaborated by Chow Tse-Tsung, which entails reinforcement of the author-reader interaction and relationship as described above in an earlier section on Wai-lim Yip's model, as well as in the last section on Stephen Owen's *zhiyin*. On the other hand, technically speaking, Yu's imagery model is commensurate with, and may as well support, Chow Tse-Tsung's so-called Confucianist approach of viewing literature as having the potential for effective exposition of the *Dao*, thus also effectively relating *Dao*, or truth, to *shiyi*.

2.3.B.1.2.7 Ming Dong Gu's suggestiveness

In his thought-provoking essay on suggestiveness,²⁹⁶ Ming Dong Gu examines the concept of suggestiveness, which he considers to be "a major theoretical category in Chinese art".²⁹⁷ He states that as an aesthetic principle, suggestiveness "generally refers to a desirable artistic quality highly valued in different forms of art, especially in poetry".²⁹⁸ And in traditional Chinese literary thought, he suggests, there are quite a few expressions that voice similar ideas as far as poetic art is concerned, e.g. *yanwai zhi yi* 言外之意 (meanings beyond the expressed words), *xianwai zhi yin* 弦外之音 (sound off the string), *xiangwai zhi xiang* 象外之象 (images beyond the image), *weiwai zhi zhi* 味外之旨 (flavors beyond the flavor) and *hanxu* 含蓄 (subtle reserve). All these expressions are said to advocate unlimited suggestiveness, which he regards comes very close to the postmodern conceptions of unlimited semiosis and "openness". He explains that in contemporary theory, openness means that "a literary text is not an enclosure of words, the messages of which are finite and limited, but a hermeneutic space constructed with verbal signs capable of generating unlimited interpretations", and its commonsense meaning is that "a literary text has no [single] 'correct' interpretation". He thus suggests that the Chinese conception of suggestiveness is compatible with unlimited semiosis or openness both in theory and in practice.²⁹⁹ Gu's deduction, however, is far from compelling and convincing.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 168.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 169.

²⁹⁶ Ming Dong Gu 2003a, 490-513.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 490.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 491.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

For suggestiveness as he interprets is more of “an art of making art” that epitomises a poetic technique identified by Liu Xie as *yishao zongduo*, *qingmao wuyi* 以少總多，情貌無遺，³⁰⁰ but that doesn’t mean that suggestiveness will ingrain a poem with such openness as described by him. His translation of *yishao zongduo*, *qingmao wuyi* as “to use limited words to represent innumerable phenomena, leaving nothing in one’s feelings or in the appearance of objects undescribed”³⁰¹ is not persuasively accurate as “innumerable” is probably derived from an overtranslation of *duo*, while the set of all possible expressions for describing *qingmao* must actually be within the scope as defined by *duo*. That “innumerable” might have unfortunately led him to equate *duo* with “open”, or his “unlimited” suggestiveness. Although it is in doubt if Gu ever succeeds in his attempt to bridge suggestiveness with openness, his sorting out of this suggestiveness concept in the Chinese tradition does draw our attention to its having been adopted as a significant assessment criterion for artistic and/or poetic quality, and hence its relevance to this thesis. But openness or suggestiveness can only be used to qualify a text/poem, and the reception part of the reader is neglected. Separating the text from the reader in this way does not offer a satisfactory solution to the interpretation problem under investigation.

Gu also points out that it is the concept of *hanxu* advanced by Sikong Tu (with its accompanying thesis, “Without attaching a single word, / [the poem may] Fully capture the wind and flow.”³⁰²) that is the pivotal idea in Chinese aesthetic suggestiveness.³⁰³ Sikong Tu’s *hanxu*, which can also be related to Liu Xie’s *yin* as presented earlier, thus can be used as a basis for developing the concept of **subtlety** (re. **Argument 2**), and by extension that of *shiyi*.

In addition, Gu’s attempt to relate suggestiveness to openness has led him to single out the Western concept of “literary suggestiveness” for analysis. He remarks that “literary suggestiveness”, also called “literary openness” in the West, is “a

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² The original in Chinese reads “不著一字，盡得風流”. See Section 2.3.B.1.1.3 on Sikong Tu’s *hanxu*.

³⁰³ Ming Dong Gu 2003a, 496. On 504, Gu strenuously relates *hanxu* to literary openness, arguing that it “is an intuitive way of conceptualizing literary openness and the poetics of openness in a psycholinguistic sense. The unlimited meanings beyond words are not withheld (*han*) or stored (*xu*) in the textual content but are generated in the gap between signifier and signified and in the space between words.” His interpretation, however, seems to contradict exactly with the meaning of *hanxu*, which highlights the suggestiveness of words in the text concerned.

concept predicated on the ontological conception of a literary text as an empty structure, constructed of words that are empty signifiers”.³⁰⁴ He then embarks on a detailed examination of the conception of literature as a *Dao*-like entity in the Chinese tradition.³⁰⁵ This is in strong accord with Chow Tse-Tsung’s so-called Confucianist approach of viewing literature as having the potential for effective exposition of the *Dao*, and thus effectively relates *Dao*, or truth, to *shiyi*.

2.3.B.1.2.8 Summary

As far as the pursuit of this thesis is concerned, a number of theoretical threads, represented by keywords/key terms, can be sorted out from the theories and/or approaches of modern Chinese poetics outlined above. For instance, whether aware of it or not, Wang Li, through his elaborate and detailed description of versification from classical poetry to modern poetry, probably vaguely, implicitly suggests that among all factors it is **familiarity** of forms and **prosodic devices** that matters, albeit the fact that forms and prosodic devices had basically been changed from the classical ones to the Western ones. Both originated from Wang Guowei’s exploration of *jingjie*, the world posited in Zhu Guangqian’s *Shi lun* and that theorised by James Liu can be regarded as development in a similar direction. Whereas Zhu emphasises the *buji buli* between the poem’s world and the real world, seemingly suggesting the function of a poem in extending the knowledge boundary of the existing knowledge base, Liu stresses the blending of a past experience with the present experience of writing and reading, or the unfamiliar with the familiar, through finding adequate words for new worlds of experience or finding new words for old familiar worlds, in such a way as to express, and even extend, the reality in a poem. Accordingly, both Zhu and Liu can be considered supporting the concept of **world** (echoing Wang Fuzhi’s *qingjing jiaorong*), just that Zhu is more concerned with keeping the delicate distance/difference, and hence the inseparability, between the real world and the poem’s world, and Liu is more concerned with forming of the poem’s world characterised by a double exploration of worlds and languages. It is in this sense that Liu’s model is technically more advanced than Zhu’s. In addition, as far as the blending of the familiar with the unfamiliar is concerned, Liu’s world also supports the notion of **familiarity**. Liu’s *jing*, which can include the actual scene as well as the imaginary scene, can readily be replaced by the poetic world/context based on the

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 504. Here, Gu does not try to delineate any difference that may be present between suggestiveness in Chinese and suggestiveness in the West, nor does he try to do the same for openness in Chinese and openness in the West.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 504-507.

Micro-context (supposedly a cognitive concept referring to what is in the mind) and the **micro-context** (an individualised cultural-literary knowledge base). As for Wai-lim Yip's "Chinese Theory of Reading", it apparently provides a more balanced approach to the interpretation problem through integrating the reading experience of a reader and an author, as well as pinpointing a poem's openness to various different voices. The implication of Yip's model, as stated earlier, is the resulting reinforcement of a literary tradition or canon by both authors and readers, whose reading experience is integrated and regurgitated into the writing process through reader expectations, and hence its relevance to **familiarity**, which as a quality or an attribute can contribute to reducing **unintelligibility** of a poem. In addition, comparing to Yip's model, our suggested mechanism of **internal contextualisation** and **external contextualisation** seems a preferred model to account for the actual process of interpretation. Stephen Owen's *lore* and *zhiyin* (a variety or development of Liu Xie's *zhiyin*), on the other hand, are respectively quite similar to that of **Chineseness** (to be introduced in a later section) and subsumable to the **general reader**, but Owen's terms are far from clearly defined, while Chineseness and the general reader stand a better chance of achieving a clear definition given the literature consulted in this chapter. Through her investigation of Chinese imagery, Pauline Yu establishes an assumed association by the Chinese reader between the imagery in a poem (and what a reader may draw from it) and the original message entrusted by the poet to the words therein. Such an association lends support to the tradition of *wen yi zai dao* as elaborated by Chow Tse-Tsung, which entails that kind of reinforcement of the author-reader interaction and relationship as built up in Wai-lim Yip's model, as well as in Stephen Owen's *zhiyin*. In particular, Yu's imagery model is commensurate with, and may as well support, Chow Tse-Tsung's so-called Confucianist approach of viewing literature as having the potential for effective exposition of the *Dao*, thus also effectively relating *Dao*, or **truth**, to *shiyi*. Ming Dong Gu's suggestiveness, which also captures the concept of openness, represents modern efforts to recover the obscure link between Dong Zhongshu's *shi wu da gu*, Sikong Tu's *hanxu* (and by extension, Liu Xie's *yin*, Yan Yu's *yan you jin er yi wu qiong* and Ye Xie's *yan zai ci er yi zai bi*) and exposition of the *Dao* (and thus truth, and *shiyi*) as expounded by Chow Tse-Tsung in his examination of the so-called Confucianist approach of viewing literature (which in turn is related to Sikong Tu's "poetics of transcendence" and Ye Xie's sayable/unsayable and explicable/inexplicable interplay). In terms of James Liu's double exploration of worlds and languages, the exploration of **worlds** can be compared to extension of the knowledge boundary for **truth**-seeking, and the exploration of language can be compared to creation of *shiyi*. Besides, Liu's claim of "extension of reality"

highlights the inadequacy of having “truth” in the definition of *shiyi*, because if it is a Micro-context (or what is in one’s mind) that is a/the source of any poetic world/context, the imaginary scene that can appear in such a world cannot be classified as truth. Accordingly, the “truth” may well be relaxed to “truthfulness”.³⁰⁶

From the above, the key terms in the hypothesis and other key concepts as highlighted, including world, truth, etc, can be traced back to the traditional poetics, and their identification in a way represents an opportunity, as well as a direction of synthesising traditional and modern approaches and/or theories from the East and the West.

2.3.B.2 Western Poetics

The influence of the literary tradition in Western poetics cannot be overestimated. In fact, the link between theory and practice is regarded as self-evident, in the sense that ideas inherited from the tradition about what poetry is will naturally have a direct impact on what gets composed.³⁰⁷ Notwithstanding this, this section does not attempt to sketch a full history of Western poetics (which in this thesis remains largely restricted to poetics as represented in English), except for some particular approaches relevant to the pursuit of this thesis, which are also considered to have a better chance of being integrated with the key concepts identified in the section on Chinese poetics. Thus, the principle is to pick from the long tradition those approaches that are commensurate with, and presumably complementary to, the Chinese key concepts.

2.3.B.2.1 Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Poetic Principle”³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ Cf. James 1907, 142 where the author defends the thesis that “The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth *happens* to [be] an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events. Its verity *is* in fact an event, a process, the process, namely, of its verifying itself, its *verification*. Its validity is the process of its *valid-ation*.” (Italics in original.) This can well be construed as suggesting replacing a stagnant concept of truth by a non-stagnant concept of truthfulness. Cf. also Williams 2010, 1 where Bernard Williams remarks that “[t]ogether with this demand for truthfulness, [...] there is an equally pervasive suspicion about truth itself” and that “[t]he desire for truthfulness drives a process of criticism which weakens the assurance that there is any secure or unqualifiedly stateable truth”.

³⁰⁷ This is what Jon Cook has similarly suggested, though his concern is about English poetry from 1900 to 2000. See Cook 2004, 3.

³⁰⁸ See Poe 2009. This essay was published posthumously in 1850, the year after Poe’s death. See Levine and Levine 2009, 177 for the reference of time.

In “The Poetic Principle”, Edgar Allan Poe argues against the concept of a long poem, proclaiming that “a long poem does not exist” because it is difficult for a reader to maintain the requisite amount of enthusiasm, and suggests that even an epic must be read as a collection of “minor poems” of little length.³⁰⁹ Long poems are, according to Poe, unable to sustain a proper mood or maintain what he refers to as “Unity” (i.e. a totality of effect and impression)³¹⁰ and are, therefore, inherently flawed.³¹¹

Poe’s contention can, in a way, be reckoned as a rule of economy of use of language, and can be related to Herbert Spencer’s “communicative efficiency” introduced in the following sub-section. Compared to James Liu’s economy, however, Poe’s preference for short poems is theoretically weak and less convincing.³¹²

2.3.B.2.2 Herbert Spencer’s “communicative efficiency”

Although not directly related to composition of poetry, Herbert Spencer’s theory is worthy of attention for its similarity to the Chinese concept of economy as identified earlier and relevance theory that is to be further examined later. In his 1852 essay, “The Philosophy of Style”, Spencer argues that it is the writer’s ideal “[t]o so present ideas that they may be apprehended with the least possible mental effort” by the reader, which is also a desideratum assumed, consciously or not, to be a standard of judgement of the quality of a piece of writing.³¹³ According to Spencer, “the more time and attention it takes to receive and understand each sentence, the less time and attention can be given to the contained idea; and the less vividly that idea be conceived”.³¹⁴ That is basically how he argues for the greatest possible

³⁰⁹ Poe 2009, 178-179. On 180, however, Poe also warns against very short poems, which he considers can never produce “a profound or enduring effect”.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 179.

³¹¹ The profound literary influence of such views of Poe’s cannot be exaggerated. It is, for instance, suggested that “Poe’s emphasis on unity, brevity, and emotional response exerted a major influence on modern poetry, with its preference for short lyric poem.” (Burt 2009, 198.)

³¹² It is even suggested, also quite unconvincingly though, that “[s]ince Poe’s own creative writings were chiefly brief, he tended to compliment brief works by other authors. This predilection led him to be short-sighted about the novel or the long poem” (Fisher 2008, 102).

³¹³ Spencer 2008, 3.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 4.

communicative efficiency. In addition, he also briefly mentions the use of **familiarity**, saying that it will be slow and with much labour for the appropriate ideas to follow unfamiliar words in another language, and it is increasing familiarity with such words that will bring greater rapidity and ease of comprehension.³¹⁵

It is interesting to note that such economy as promoted by Spencer has shared common ground with the Chinese saying of “maximum significance from limited words” as expounded earlier. Besides, as quoted by Viktor Shklovsky in his 1917 essay entitled “Art as Technique”,³¹⁶ Spencer’s ideas represent a starting point of Shklovsky’s theorisation on “defamiliarisation”, a concept to be introduced in the next section. Though still lacking in theoretical cogency as viewed from the present, such development and continuity in the West may be seen as having offered a potential yet latent merging point of the two traditions of the East and the West, as well as modern pragmatic theory (such as relevance theory) and literary theory.

2.3.B.2.3 Victor Shklovsky’s “defamiliarisation”

Victor Shklovsky believes that the purpose of art is to force us to notice. His idea comes from his contention that “[a]rt is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object”.³¹⁷ Apart from conveying meaning, a work of art thus forces on the reader an awareness of its meaning. Art is therefore a record of as well as the occasion for that awareness. In line with this argument, Shklovsky suggests that poetry is recognised by its ability to make a man look with an exceptionally high level of awareness. A work is created “artistically”, Shklovsky contends, so that “its perception is impeded and the greatest possible effect is produced through the slowness of the perception”.³¹⁸ The chief technique for achieving the heightening of awareness, and hence the “lingering”,³¹⁹ is what he calls defamiliarisation.³²⁰ Upon

³¹⁵ Ibid., 6.

³¹⁶ Shklovsky 1965. It is noted that Shklovsky has quoted Spencer’s words, calling the idea “the law of the economy of creative effort”, on p. 9.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 12. Adrian Pilkington comments that it is Shklovsky’s idea that defamiliarisation is the “basic aim of art”. See Shklovsky 1965, 12 and Pilkington 2000, 18 for their remarks respectively. Pilkington’s comment is, however, considered an over-interpretation, as it is noted that Shklovsky does not clearly specify what such an aim should be in his essay, except for saying that “art exists [so] that one may recover the sensation of life”.

³¹⁸ Shklovsky 1965, 22.

³¹⁹ Shklovsky argues that “[a]s a result of this lingering, the object is perceived not in its extension in space, but, so to speak, in its continuity. Thus ‘poetic language’ gives satisfaction” (1965, 22).

the working of defamiliarisation, the language of poetry is thus “a difficult, roughened, impeded language”.³²¹ Defamiliarisation is certainly useful in producing a kind of effect, whether one calls it awareness or anything else, and thus works perfectly well as a model for poetry analysis, but Shklovsky’s theory operates most fluently at the perception level, while it seems to account inadequately for *shiyi* at the cognitive level. It is argued in this thesis that defamiliarisation is but one technique that can account for *shiyi* derivation, but it is simply too primitive as an explanatory concept with which to illustrate how *shiyi* can actually be derived.³²² Besides, with his theory predominantly focused on the textual level, Shklovsky simply cannot account satisfactorily for the rise and downfall of reputation of a particular poet, or his reception, in the literary history.³²³ As such, an approach that can operate satisfactorily at the reader’s cognitive level, and that which can justify a poet’s reception over time, is badly needed.

Of particular interest to this thesis is what Shklovsky understands to be Alexander Potebnya’s idea that aesthetic feeling is the reaction to “economy of mental effort” permitted by poetry as a special way of thinking in images.³²⁴ According to this train of thought, the purpose of imagery is to “help channel various objects and activities into groups and to clarify the unknown by means of the known”.³²⁵ This is more relevant to the cognitive model which has no place in his theory of defamiliarisation though. On the other hand, **familiarity** seems to be a better option for conceptualisation of *shiyi* at the cognitive level. (Re. **Argument 2**.)³²⁶

2.3.B.2.4 Michael Riffaterre’s *Semiotics of Poetry*

In his *Semiotics of Poetry*,³²⁷ Michael Riffaterre first defines poetry as

³²⁰ This, of course, might not be Shklovsky’s own invention. Wellek and Warren, for instance, remark that “this criterion of novelty [of Shklovsky’s] has been very widespread, at least since the Romantic movement [...]” (1973, 242).

³²¹ Shklovsky 1965, 22.

³²² This will be further discussed in Section 2.3.B.2.6 on Miall and Kuiken’s literariness.

³²³ As Wellek and Warren aptly put it, “as literary history moves on, some poets grow strange again, others remain ‘familiar’” (1973, 242).

³²⁴ Shklovsky 1965, 5-6.

³²⁵ Ibid., 6.

³²⁶ Here, a new concept of “**unfamiliarisation**” based on familiarity can be suggested to compare and contrast with “defamiliarisation”. For detail, refer to a later section.

³²⁷ Riffaterre 1978.

expressing concepts and things by indirection, or saying one thing and meaning another.³²⁸ He stresses the significance of the dialectic between text and reader in understanding the literary phenomenon, and hence his declared principle of taking into account “only such facts as are accessible to the reader and are perceived in relation to the poem as a special finite context”.³²⁹ Thus, his method can be reckoned as more akin to that of Reader Response.

Riffaterre refers the semantic effect of the underlying semiotic structure of a poetic text as “significance” or “semiosis”, which is contrasted with the “meanings” furnished by individual images on the level of mimesis, which in turn is the referential or mimetic language of the sociolect (or a society’s linguistic code).³³⁰ The individual images of a poem might have a certain meaning on the mimetic level, but on the level of the semiotic system of the text they combine to produce a quite different significance. The reader will first be required to deploy his linguistic competence, as well as literary competence, as input in the first stage of reading for decoding the poem concerned.³³¹ Linguistic competence is used for perceiving ungrammaticalities, or incompatibilities between words, which may include identification of tropes and figures. Literary competence, on the other hand, involves the reader’s familiarity with the descriptive systems (i.e. networks of words associated with one another around a kernel word), themes, his society’s mythologies and other texts, which enables him to fill in gaps when there are incomplete descriptions, allusions or quotations.³³² In the second stage, a truly hermeneutic reading occurs when the reader remembers what he has just read and modifies his understanding of it in light of what he is currently decoding, realising what first appeared to be ungrammaticalities are now seen as variants of the same structural matrix.³³³ This is how the reader is able to obtain the significance through grasping the “sustained relation [of the text] to one structure”.

Admittedly, Riffaterre has put forward a two-level/stage reading system through which the underlying meaning can be interpreted in terms of the surface meaning,³³⁴

³²⁸ Ibid., 1.

³²⁹ Ibid., 1-2.

³³⁰ Ibid., 2-3.

³³¹ Ibid., 3 and 5.

³³² Ibid., 5 and 39.

³³³ Ibid., 5-6.

³³⁴ As he puts it, “[...] before reaching the significance the reader has to hurdle the mimesis”. See *ibid.*, 5.

but his approach still does not satisfactorily account for the artistic value derivable from a poem. Technically speaking, Riffaterre's model displays the felicity typical of structuralism in explaining by means of structures/system "out of touch with the real world",³³⁵ but it falls short of positing a mechanism capable of explicating literature in terms of some criterion such as *shiyi*, and hence its insufficiency if applied in this thesis.

2.3.B.2.5 Drew A. Hyland's Plato

Plato is well known to have condemned the poet, as imitator, as cut off from truth and knowing nothing about the various arts or persons he imitates.³³⁶ Insofar as the two-world notion (the real world and the created world in James Liu's words) and similar ones are concerned, however, Plato's poetics may seem quite relevant to our discussion. In his *Plato and the Question of Beauty*,³³⁷ Drew A. Hyland first examines how an attempt in the *Hippias Major* (one of the famous Platonic dialogues) fails to arrive at a definition of *kalon* (or beauty, its closest equivalent in English), and then suggests, after detailing the discussions in the *Symposium* (another dialogue), the *non-discursive* character of beauty, which is neither some discursive account nor some demonstrative knowledge, and concludes that the insight from the dialogues is not knowing of beauty but living in a certain way.³³⁸ This certainly underlies some similar difficulty in defining *shiyi* in this thesis, highlighting the divide between knowing (by means of writing) and feeling (by means of living). In addition, Hyland elaborates, in accordance with his version of Plato's philosophy, on the dialectic of the discursive and the non-discursive in genuine knowing, in particular highlighting the opposition between the adequacy of words in expressing the real truths and the simplicity of expression if such truths are indeed expressed in words.³³⁹ This, in turn, is attributed to the limitations of language indispensable to the pursuit of knowledge, which can be illustrated by the language paradox resulting from the arbitrariness of

³³⁵ This "out of touch with the real world" can be accounted for by Paul Ricoeur, who accepts that structuralism is characterised by a "closed" system, "closed" in the sense that, as in a semiotic system, all relations therein are only immanent to the system itself, without any of them being linked to external, non-semiotic reality. From the perspective of structuralism, therefore, language "no longer appears as a mediation between minds and things". See Ricoeur 1976, 5-6.

³³⁶ Else 1986, 45.

³³⁷ Hyland 2008. N.B.: This work is Hyland's reflections on Plato's philosophy, but what he arrives at has strong implications on poetics and expressions of truth, and hence its relevance to this thesis.

³³⁸ Ibid., chaps. 1 and 2, esp. the summary on 63.

³³⁹ Ibid., 113.

words (rendering them unable to attain the stability of beings) and the losing of flexibility in writing (as compared to dialogical speech).³⁴⁰ Such limitations are relevant to how abstract ideas, such as love, *shiyi*, etc, can be expressed, and hence also the theorising of the subtlety-unintelligibility continuum posited in this thesis. (Re. **Argument 2.**)

2.3.B.2.6 Miall and Kuiken's literariness

In their attempt to reconceptualise literariness, Miall and Kuiken suggest that literariness can be regarded as the product of a distinctive mode of reading identifiable through three key components of response to literary texts.³⁴¹ According to their proposed model, literariness is constituted when *reinterpretive transformations* of a conventional concept or feeling are prompted by the striking *defamiliarisation* of conventionally understood referents, which in turn is triggered by *stylistic or narrative variations*. Each of the three components of literariness (namely, stylistic or narrative variations, defamiliarisation, and reinterpretive transformations) may occur separately (e.g. advertisements frequently apply arresting stylistic features, and traumatic events may trigger the transformation of conventional feelings and concepts), but the key to literariness is the interaction of all these components. It follows that literature is unique not because of “any special content, contextual conditions (e.g., educational practices), or ideological functions”, but because it “initiates a distinctive form of psychological change”.³⁴² As such, it is suggested that it is “against a background of familiarity and habituation” that the strikingness of literature occurs.³⁴³

Apparently proposed against the view that “[t]here purportedly are no processes unique to the act of literary reading” as implied by theories grounded in cognitive psychology or postmodern theory,³⁴⁴ this model posits a mechanism involving the

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 110.

³⁴¹ See Miall and Kuiken 1999, 122.

³⁴² Ibid., 123.

³⁴³ Ibid., 134.

³⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, 121-122, where the authors elaborate that reading literature may be understood as a type of discourse processing, a particular organisation of the cognitive processes that are also apparent in ordinary prose or conversation (according to theories grounded in cognitive psychology), or the outcome of rhetorical devices designed to promote a particular ideology (according to theories grounded in postmodern theory). As they explain, theories of both kinds equally do not accord literary texts their distinctiveness, but they both imply that such texts depend on functions common to

interaction of the three specified components as follows: the first two components of literariness (including stylistic features or striking features due to narrative, and the reader's defamiliarising response to them) are necessary yet insufficient to identify literariness, while the third component is constituted by the reader's **thematizing attempts** to articulate the phenomena within the text that are found striking and evocative of feeling, during the process of which the reader progressively transforms an affective theme across striking or evocative passages, becoming implicated in the existential concerns embodied in those passages.³⁴⁵

As suggested in footnote 106, Miall and Kuiken's model is considered technically narrow-based and over-simplistic because, primarily, too much significance is attached to defamiliarisation. It is noted, however, that defamiliarisation is but *one* device adopted in achieving or giving rise to *shiyi*.³⁴⁶

Besides, according to the model, when the readers find the literary features (including foregrounding devices such as stylistic features) striking and evocative in relation to the norms of language or narrative that are apparent in ordinary discourse, their attention will be captured and held, and familiar and conventionally understood

all texts.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 135-136.

³⁴⁶ In fact, *familiarisation* can also be a device of deriving *shiyi*. For instance, the famous Qing dynasty *ci*-poet Nalan Xingde 納蘭性德 (1655–1685) has a *ci*-poem made to the tune of *Huan xi sha* 浣溪沙 (Washing silk in the stream), which reads “誰念西風獨自涼？蕭蕭黃葉閉疏窗。沉思往事立殘陽。被酒莫驚春睡重，賭書消得潑茶香。當時只道是尋常。” (rendered roughly here as “Who would still care whether I feel the chill of the westerly alone, while falling leaves come whistling, almost closing the half-closed windows? Deeply thinking of the past, I now stand under the setting sun. One day in Spring, I dared not wake you up from your sleep after wine. One of us knew more of the book and won the game, and poured the tea by accident. They all appeared so ordinary as they so happened.”). In this poem, Nalan depicts some ordinary daily experiences, which should be familiar to him all the time. Yet, the poet does not try to *defamiliarise* such experiences in order to create what this thesis refers to as *shiyi*. (In Shklovsky's words quoted in an earlier section, upon the working of defamiliarisation for achieving the heightening of awareness, the language of poetry should be “a difficult, roughened, impeded language”.) Instead, Nalan remarks that those experiences were only taken as ordinary at the time of their happening, which suggests that as the time is different, what was viewed ordinary has assumed its new meaningfulness. In this way, the reader is made aware of a *new angle* of reading the *ci*-poem, which is to pay attention to what *time* has done to convert experiences, or convert our perception of what happened. See Nalan 2001, 140 for the *ci*-poem in original.

referents will, for a moment, seem less familiar, as though there is something more to them than can be immediately grasped due to the defamiliarisation devices concerned. Accordingly, they will reflect in response on the implications of the defamiliarising expressions, with their reinterpetive effort modifying or transforming their conventional feelings or concepts. Such reinterpretation is suggested to usually follow an interval during which readers search (not necessarily consciously) for an appropriate context within which to locate or generate such new understanding.³⁴⁷ However, it is unclear how, according to their model, defamiliarisation in a poem can exactly result in their so-called reinterpetive transformations in the reader. In addition, there is a strange suggestion by the authors that a reader will regularly notice distinctive stylistic and narrative features in a text and find them strikingly or evocatively defamiliarising, yet it is not the reader's conventional perspective that directs the reading experience, but the conventional perspective of the reader that the literariness of the text calls into question.³⁴⁸ So quite contrary to normal observation on influence from, say, the tradition or genres, the authors are committed to the view that the conventional perspective is somehow characterised by passivity and subject to reshaping challenge every time the reader reads a piece of literary writing.

Moreover, the model accords "feeling" a prominent place, which is to provide "a route to the self, especially to personal experiences that offer a new interpretive context following the moment of defamiliarization", so much so that "[t]he modification or transformation of readers' concepts or feelings [...] is thus specific to the individual reader", and it is "in this respect [...] that literature seems to invoke what is individual in the individual".³⁴⁹ However, it is not specified exactly how such feeling is able to perform such a significant role,³⁵⁰ not to mention the fact that the authors have not properly defined this feeling in the first place.³⁵¹ As such, it is

³⁴⁷ Miall and Kuiken 1999, 122-124.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 127.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 134.

³⁵⁰ A poem of Coleridge's is cited as an example to try illustrate, though quite unsuccessfully, the role played by "feeling". Quoted below is the excerpt from their account: "After exploring the feeling of being alone, the reader turns to the situation of the protagonist [...] and then makes an important generalization that seems to include herself. In this way, the response unfolds in successive phases: Initial awareness of a feeling with some personal relevance, the use of this feeling to locate a meaning for the poem, and the application of this notion to the position of the protagonist. Finally, [...] we see a convergence of the protagonist's situation with that of the reader". Ibid., 134-135.

³⁵¹ There is of course also the confusion over the relationship between the all too active "feeling" here and the all too passive "conventional feelings" (i.e. the target of reinterpetive transformations) cited

suggested to replace their defamiliarisation with (un)familiarisation based on familiarity in our proposed framework. Put simply at this stage, **(un)familiarisation** incorporates familiarisation and unfamiliarisation, and involves also a more reasonably posited knowledge base (i.e. the individualised knowledge base, the Micro/micro-context of a general reader) as the basis of (un)familiarisation, so that changes resulting from reading can be better accounted for.³⁵²

Notwithstanding the above, the model is still insightful in the following ways. First, literariness can be comparable to *shiyi*, with the former's focus on investigating the reading experience of the reader in terms of transformation of feelings and concepts highly relevant to theorisation of *shiyi*. (Re. **Argument 2**.) Second, the two authors rightly point out that the strikingness of literature occurs "against a background of familiarity and habituation", opening up some room for in-depth conceptualisation of **familiarity** (re. **Argument 2**), as well as its accompanying concept of (un)familiarisation as suggested above. Third, reader response is given a more detailed though less than overwhelmingly convincing account by the split of the reading process by defamiliarisation,³⁵³ as the model suggests, which effectively delineates "the reinterpreted effort that follows defamiliarization" as "the source of individual differences in response to literary texts".³⁵⁴ This, besides offering insights as regards conceptualisation of the **general reader** (re. **Argument 4**), calls for reworking or even replacement of defamiliarisation in terms of/by **familiarity**. (Re. **Argument 2**.) Fourth, their idea of the reader's making thematising attempts to articulate the phenomena within the text that are found striking and evocative sheds

earlier.

³⁵² Here is an example to compare defamiliarisation and (un)familiarisation: A rose is usually considered thorny (and this is the common thing), but a poet may "defamiliarise" a rose by describing it as "less thorny than a man's chin, or his head". This defamiliarisation technique is exceptionally useful in drawing a reader's attention to an otherwise commonplace phenomenon ("a thorny rose" in this case), though it does not serve any meaningful purpose in reaching further, i.e. extending the use to enhancing a reader's self-understanding such as through the process of (un)familiarisation (a simple example of which is comparing the rose to love, say, in "love is nothing but a thorny rose", where the familiar "thorny rose" is "unfamiliarised" by the abstract concept of "love", and the unfamiliar "love" is "familiarised" by the "thorny rose").

³⁵³ Such a split is far too mechanistic without due regard to any possibility of a reader's bringing knowledge from his own background to the comprehension well before defamiliarisation is to take place, should defamiliarisation be the only mechanism to affect the reader. This, of course, is supposed to be overcome by introduction of "(un)familiarisation".

³⁵⁴ See Miall and Kuiken 1999, 134.

light on the contextualisation mechanism in which this thesis is interested (re. **Argument 1**), and the transformation on the reader (who is then implicated in the existential concerns embodied in striking or evocative passages of the text concerned), which they describe as the result of such attempts, also advises on the working of *shiyi* (re. **Argument 2**) as outcome of poetry reading.

2.3.B.2.7 Summary

In this section, a number of approaches are introduced. Edgar Allan Poe's "The Poetic Principle" essentially states the significance of economy of use of language, in a way mirroring, though also revealing its simplisitic nature when compared to, the **economy** concept identified in Chinese poetics. Victor Shklovsky's "defamiliarisation", as well as his notion on the purpose of imagery as helping to channel various objects and activities into groups and clarify the unknown by means of the known, is particularly relevant to the working of the concept of **familiarity** in poetry. In Michael Riffaterre's *Semiotics of Poetry*, a two-level system is posited through which the underlying meaning can supposedly be interpreted in terms of the surface meaning in a poem. Although this approach fails to convincingly account for the artistic value that can be derivable from a poem, it provides some insights as to how technically the underlying meaning in a text can be recovered in a two-level system, and hopefully by extension, a two-**world** model. His "saying one thing and meaning another," of course, also reminds us of its similarity to Ye Xie's *yan zai ci er yi zai bi*, which, as suggested above, is more relevant to the creation of *shiyi*, and also to Chow Tse-Tsung's elaborated *wen yi zai dao* as far as exposition of truth is concerned. Such exposition of **truth**, in turn, is considered the focus of Sikong Tu's "poetics of transcendence" and Ye Xie's sayable/unsayable and explicable/inexplicable interplay.³⁵⁵ Besides lending support to recognition of the difficulty in defining an abstract concept, such as *shiyi* in this thesis, Drew A. Hyland's Plato provides an entry point to understanding the opposition between the adequacy of words in expressing the real truths and the simplicity of expression if such truths are indeed expressed in words, which is relevant to the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum**. Miall and Kuiken's model on literariness has provided so far a most insightful reference model as to how *shiyi* can be conceptualised. Their literariness can be comparable to *shiyi*, with the former's

³⁵⁵ There is, however, the distinction between the truth of the text and the truth of the world. The truth of the text is relevant to the text or the world of the text, but it may not necessarily be valid for the physical world at large. Thus, Riffaterre's method is relevant, but also restricted, to investigation of textual truth.

focus on investigating the reading experience of the reader in terms of transformation of feelings/concepts highly relevant to theorisation of *shiyi*. Their remark concerning the strikingness of literature occurring against a background of familiarity and habituation also helps to open up some room for in-depth conceptualisation of **familiarity**. They also provide reader response with a more detailed, though less than overwhelmingly convincing, account by introducing the split of the reading process by defamiliarisation, identifying “the reinterpetive effort that follows defamiliarization” as “the source of individual differences in response to literary texts” which besides offering insights as regards conceptualisation of the **general reader**, calls for reworking of defamiliarisation, or even replacement of it by our more encompassing concept of (un)familiarisation.³⁵⁶ Besides, their idea of the reader’s making thematising attempts to articulate the phenomena within the text sheds light on the **contextualisation mechanism** in which this thesis is interested, and the transformation on the reader they describe as the result of such attempts also advises on the working of *shiyi* as outcome of poetry reading.

2.3.C LINGUISTICS:

Linguistics is the systematic study of language. With the systematicity in this field of study, it is hopefully possible to offer, from a linguistic perspective, some possible solutions to the unintelligibility problem for scrutiny. This section comprises a sub-section on pragmatics including the semantic/pragmatic problematic and relevance theory, as well as a sub-section on cognitive linguistics focusing on Text World Theory.

2.3.C.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics is “the systematic study of meaning by virtue of, or dependent on, language use”,³⁵⁷ and its central topics of inquiry include “implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and deixis”,³⁵⁸ some indirect ways of expression, except

³⁵⁶ This will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

³⁵⁷ Huang Yan 2007, xi. Huang Yan refers to the quoted definition as the Anglo-American conception he has adopted in the book for the reason that it “delimits the scope of the discipline in a relatively coherent, systematic, and principled way” when compared to the alternative European Continental conception.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 2.

arguably for speech acts,³⁵⁹ comparable to or not incompatible with that of, say, *yi zai yan wai* in the Chinese literary tradition. Among the topics mentioned, implicature and deixis are the two most relevant to this thesis, of which the former will be dealt with in a following section. Besides, anaphora is another topic which is directly related to our discussion of contextualisation. Suffice it to say here that deixis is concerned with reference to the world “external” to the text proper, while anaphora is concerned with reference to the “internal” world of the text proper.³⁶⁰ It should also be noted that what pragmatics refers to in this thesis is primarily theoretical pragmatics that is concerned with “how we use language to do all the various things that enable us to relate to, understand and possibly influence people”,³⁶¹ which thus situates itself within the spectrum of linguistics between one end of semantics and the other end, or the contextual end, of branches including discourse analysis, conversation analysis and sociolinguistics.³⁶² Theoretical pragmatics, for its focus on answering the question on how meaning can in general be communicated between speakers and hearers, is further contrasted with social pragmatics, which, in common with fields like discourse analysis and conversation analysis, relies more on authentic recorded data as input for an analysis of what people do in specific communicative situations.³⁶³

So the question here is which branch to choose from the wide spectrum for further theorisation in this thesis. In the following, the divide between semantics and pragmatics, as well as that between pragmatics and other related branches, will be briefly discussed to substantiate the preference for pragmatics.

2.3.C.1.1 The Borderline between Pragmatics/Semantics and Pragmatics/Other Linguistic Branches

There is no absolute, clear-cut borderline between the domains of semantics and pragmatics.³⁶⁴ It is, for instance, claimed that pragmatics should be allowed to

³⁵⁹ That depends on how one sees as the function, if any, of literature. If, for instance, literature is considered to be able to exert the influence of a canon, it is logical to think of it as having an influencing function, like what speech act is supposed to do.

³⁶⁰ Accordingly, the concept of world as adopted and/or adapted in this thesis can deal with these topics, if warranted, within the proposed framework. For detail, refer to Chapter 3.

³⁶¹ Chapman 2011, 4.

³⁶² Ibid., 4-5.

³⁶³ Ibid., 6-8.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 19-20.

largely impinge upon the traditional domain of semantics,³⁶⁵ though it is not without controversy as to the exact territory of this domain and how far beyond semantics should be allowed to proceed as far as interpretation of meaning in actual use of language is concerned.³⁶⁶ On the other hand, a more clear divide is also suggested for semantics and pragmatics, where the former is said to deal with “the literal meaning of words and the meaning of the way they are combined, which taken together form [...] the starting point from which the whole meaning of a particular utterance is constructed”, while the latter to deal with “all the ways in which literal meaning must be refined, enriched or extended to arrive at an understanding of what a speaker meant in uttering a particular expression”.³⁶⁷ According to this latter view, it is easy to see the implied close connection and cooperation, and also the division of labour, between semantics and pragmatics. Since, given the findings in earlier sections, the meaning of a literary text is considered more than the literal meaning it contains, it is logical and reasonable to look into pragmatics, rather than semantics, for insights regarding the interpretation problem under consideration.

As for the different applicable areas of pragmatics and other related fields nearer the contextual end of the spectrum, it is noted that branches such as discourse analysis, conversation analysis and sociolinguistics are more concerned with “fairly long stretches of language use or with the ways in which language use relates to broader social and cultural systems”.³⁶⁸ Although there are instances of poems which run as long as tens or hundreds of lines, analysis of poetry in this thesis is primarily for the purpose of determining its *shiyi* as a means of resolving the unintelligibility problem, which is basically and fundamentally a text-based quest. As such, the investigation emphasising broader social and cultural systems will not be a preferred route, and hence the rejection of such approaches lying nearer the so-called contextual end. Besides, as social pragmatics relies more on authentic recorded data as input for an analysis of what people do in specific communicative situations, it is not appropriate

³⁶⁵ This is what François Recanati promotes as a new view on the semantics/pragmatics divide, according to which pragmatics should be allowed to largely impinge upon the traditional domain of semantics, though he also admits the existence of a continued influence of the traditional view that semantics is self-sustained in determining what the speaker says (hence a sharp separation of semantics from pragmatics). See Recanati 2010, 1-3 and 6.

³⁶⁶ Cf. Chapman 2011, 4, where Siobhan Chapman tries to give a concise, but rather restrictive definition to semantics as “the study of the meaning of language without any consideration of contexts of use or as the formal study of linguistic meaning”.

³⁶⁷ See Kearns 2011, 1.

³⁶⁸ See Chapman 2011, 5.

for poetry analysis, which is more concerned with instances of literary communication rather than communicative situations analysed say in discourse analysis and conversation analysis, and hence our preference for theoretical pragmatics over social pragmatics.

Despite its being generally regarded as a branch of pragmatics,³⁶⁹ relevance theory as an important development in post-Gricean pragmatics,³⁷⁰ is also a cognitive theory, as it is concerned with the relationship between language and mind, and interested in describing the cognitive processes that speakers and hearers go through in communication.³⁷¹ Having already been introduced earlier in working out the hypothesis in Chapter 1, relevance theory will be further explored in the following with attention given to how it can be better incorporated into the proposed theoretical framework with regard to its relevance to the pursuit of this thesis.

2.3.C.1.2 Relevance Theory

As stated in Chapter 1, relevance theory has to be adjusted or modified if it is to better fit for the purposes of this thesis. Accordingly, Anders Pettersson's analysis of interpretation, as well as our elaboration on the two types of unintelligibility, has been suggested to strengthen relevance theory. Besides, the focus has been shifted from relevance itself, considered in this thesis as an intermediary, to what relevance in the case concerned is directed. It is posited that in normal cases of verbal communication, relevance is directed to (achieving) the aim of communication, usually taken as enrichment of knowledge (truth) based on enhancement of cognitive effect; in the case of poetry appreciation, relevance is directed to (achieving) *shiyi* based on enhancement of cognitive effect, defined as an awareness of enhancement of truthfulness.

³⁶⁹ For instance, there is a chapter on "Relevance theory" under the section on "Modern Pragmatics" in Chapman 2011, a chapter on "Relevance theoretic pragmatics" under the section on "Post-Gricean pragmatics" in Archer and Grundy 2011, and a chapter on "Relevance Theory" by Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber and another on "Relevance Theory and the Saying/Implicating Distinction" by Robyn Carston in Horn and Ward 2004.

³⁷⁰ See Chapman 2011, 102, and also 90, where it is pointed out that post-Gricean pragmatics attempts to continue develop an account of meaning broadly along the lines suggested by Paul Grice, but neo-Gricean accounts are comparatively reductionalist in nature, endeavouring to explain more with as fewer pragmatic principles as possible. N.B.: Paul Grice's (1913-1988) work is one of the foundations of the modern study of pragmatics.

³⁷¹ See Chapman 2011, 103.

In view of earlier sections in this chapter, further adjustment may also be warranted with reference to a number of criticisms. For instance, though not directly made against some “two-world” view, it has been suggested that the drawback of Sperber and Wilson’s model is that it lacks any social element, so that “considerations of culture and society are notably absent in the characterisation of individuals’ cognitive environments”.³⁷² Theoretically, this view is rather misleading, and the attack somewhat misplaced. For even though relevance theory is primarily concerned with the inner cognitive working dedicated to the analysis of an utterance for meaning, given our “intermediary” interpretation, the concept of “relevance” itself should inherently relate “what is in an utterance” to “what is in the world”. Thus, relevance theory does not promulgate a closed-system analysis. However, this pragmatic theory does not adequately emphasise to what particular literary and/or cultural contexts relevance should be directed.³⁷³ As such, it is advised to supplement relevance theory by concepts such as **Chineseness**, **micro-context** and **macro-context**. (Re. **Argument 1**.)³⁷⁴ Fundamentally, this agrees with James Liu’s modern and more concrete version of synthesis of “emotion” and “scene” in his world, as well as with Paul Ricoeur’s “world” to be introduced in a later section.

Paul Werth, the earliest proponent of Text World Theory to be introduced in a later section, has some serious and more convincing criticisms on relevance theory though. Werth criticises Sperber and Wilson (1986)’s notion of relevance, suggesting that “Sperber and Wilson’s treatment of context is extremely crude”.³⁷⁵ In Werth’s opinion, the relevance theorists’ two determining factors of relevance, namely the effort needed and the cognitive effects achieved occurring in an inverse proportion, turn out to constitute a kind of cost-benefit analysis.³⁷⁶ But since relevance theory actually “provides no way of assessing either cost or benefit with any precision sufficient enough to make the comparison”, this approach is nothing

³⁷² See Talbot 1997, 446, where the author also comments that “[i]n the real world, however, people are social beings who are working within preexisting conventions...”.

³⁷³ The authors’ frequent reference to “encyclopaedic entry” in Sperber and Wilson 2001 (e.g. on 87 it is remarked that “the encyclopaedic entry for the concept *Napoleon* would contain a set of assumptions about Napoleon” [italics in original]), though helpful to generalise and theorise, is considered a device to avoid specifying the contexts.

³⁷⁴ See also n.78 in Chapter 1 regarding “bounded rationality”.

³⁷⁵ Werth 1999, 143.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 138.

other than exact.³⁷⁷ He is in particular critical of failure of Sperber and Wilson's theory in entertaining narrative beginnings, as according to their theory, any such beginning is unlikely to express any assumption having a contextual effect on the set of assumptions one has in mind while reading the beginning, as represented by {C}. Hence, he concludes that Sperber and Wilson's claim about the relation between relevance and contextual effects, i.e. having some contextual effect in a context is a necessary condition for relevance, is simply wrong.³⁷⁸ In this way, Werth has identified a major weakness in the relevance theorists' approach, which is how cognitive effect can be assessed accurately in the cost-benefit analysis.³⁷⁹

Werth's critique is valid and convincing, and Sperber and Wilson's response is rather feeble.³⁸⁰ It is noted their weakness occurs not because of the nature of the cost-benefit analysis, but because of the absence of a more basic criterion by which to make the assessment. Therefore, if they cannot specify "to what relevance is directed", their relevance aiming at enhanced cognitive effect can never be a convincing account of how an addressee/reader reacts on-line as far as what is relevant is concerned.³⁸¹ In fact, without any focus of attention, such as **themes**

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 145.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 140-141.

³⁷⁹ Werth suggests that his **incrementation model** may be a better approach, according to which "each proposition is assessed in terms of the interaction between the sense and assumptions it brings with it and those contained in the common ground (CG) of the discourse up to that point", so that the CG is constantly being *updated*, and hence there is no need for a cost-benefit analysis (1999, 145). However, Werth's approach is, after all, just a more meticulous version of a cost-benefit analysis, which is also subject to the same criticism he has levelled at the relevance theorists.

³⁸⁰ Though not referring to Werth direct, Sperber and Wilson did offer some kind of response in a later essay by suggesting that: according to their theory, interpretation made on-line begins when the utterance concerned is still in progress, so that "[s]ome tentative or incomplete interpretative hypotheses may be made and later revised or completed in the light of their apparent consequences for the overall interpretation", and it is their assumption that "interpretative hypotheses about explicit content and implicatures are developed in parallel, and stabilize when they are mutually adjusted, and jointly adjusted with the hearer's expectations of relevance" (Wilson and Sperber 2002, 609). Their solution is, however, more like adopting or incorporating Werth's incrementation model without admitting it.

³⁸¹ It is interesting to note that in an *earlier* essay, Wilson and Sperber spelt out, only rather vaguely, and unlike their technical definition given to relevance later, that "[i]n general, the relevance of an utterance is established relative to a set of beliefs and assumptions – that is, a set of propositions; relevance is a relation between the proposition expressed by an utterance, on the one hand, and the set

(against which thematising attempts from Miall and Kuiken's model are made), on which to expend his processing effort, it is simply impossible for the addressee/reader to assess, no matter how roughly he does, what is more relevant, as merely cognitive effect (out of his "expectations of relevance") is not sufficient to be a criterion in this regard. Moreover, cognitive effect can be strong with reference to theme A, but weak with reference to theme B, so its strength depends on what the addressee/reader sees as the right theme. And it cannot be taken for granted that the addressee/reader can always opt for the interpretation with the higher level of cognitive effect according to the first principle (i.e. "Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance.") because he, just like the speaker/author, is also subject to his own *abilities* and *preferences*. Assuming that preferences can be ignored when both parties are considered willing to contribute to effective communication, then the issue will be how to accommodate differences in abilities which may result in unintelligibility problems. This accommodation is, in this thesis, suggested to be achieved through the introduction of the concepts of **Micro/micro-context** and **Macro/macro-context**, as suggested in Chapter 1.

From Werth's critique as well as the brief introduction of relevance theory above, it is suggested that given its simple yet powerful intermediary of relevance, relevance theory is still appropriate for the purposes of this thesis, but only so subject to its being revised or strengthened in the area of context through concepts such as themes (from thematisation) and Micro/micro-context and Macro/macro-context as suggested above.

2.3.C.2 Cognitive Linguistics

Cognitive Linguistics is the study of language in its cognitive function based on the assumption that our interaction with the world is mediated through informational structures in the mind.³⁸² Central to Cognitive Linguistics is the belief that linguistic knowledge involves not just knowledge of the language, but knowledge of the world as mediated by the language, or knowledge through language.³⁸³ Given that literature is more than the literary text of language, Cognitive Linguistics is well positioned as a tool of poetry analysis.

of propositions in the hearer's accessible memory on the other", and that "being relevant is a matter of inducing the hearer to expand or modify his set of initial beliefs or assumptions", without actually characterising "relevance" (1981, 169 and 171).

³⁸² See Geeraerts and Cuyckens 2007b, 5.

³⁸³ Ibid., 6-7.

Cognitive Linguistics can be considered a competitive theory or group of theories of relevance theory or pragmatic theories, as evidenced in Markus Tendahl's *A Hybrid Theory of Metaphor*.³⁸⁴ As for cognitive poetics, which is “all about reading literature”,³⁸⁵ it is regarded as a range of cognitive linguistic approaches to literature built on cognitive linguistics and cognitive psychology.³⁸⁶ In the following, Text World Theory, an approach of cognitive poetics³⁸⁷ situated in the tradition of cognitive linguistics³⁸⁸ that remains close and related to relevance theory, is presented for scrutiny.

2.3.C.2.1 Text World Theory³⁸⁹

Paul Werth's Text World Theory is a discourse framework concerned with how a text is constructed as well as how the context surrounding the text influences its production and reception.³⁹⁰ Today, Text World Theory has seen some modifications, but not substantial deviations from Werth's version.³⁹¹

The essence of Werth's theory lies in its exploration of a **Common Ground (CG)**, which is the product of negotiation by mutual attempts in a discourse.³⁹² At any given point in the current discourse, a CG is the set of actually relevant propositions in that discourse, including all those propositions which have been

³⁸⁴ Tendahl 2009. Tendahl's book will be introduced as one latest academic attempt in the direction of the pursuit of this thesis in a later section.

³⁸⁵ Stockwell 2002, 1.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 4 and Freeman 2007, 1177.

³⁸⁷ Chap. 10 on Text Worlds in Stockwell 2002 is devoted to introduction of Text World Theory.

³⁸⁸ Situated within the tradition of cognitive linguistics, Text World Theory was first formulated by Paul Werth in late 1980s and early 1990s, and fully expositied in Werth 1999. See Gavins 2007b, 6-7.

³⁸⁹ Text World Theory is also regarded as a method of stylistics, which, according to Mick Short, is “an approach to the analysis of (literary) texts using *linguistic* description” (emphasis original). See Short 1996, 1. Gavins, for instance, presents an analysis of a poem by applying Text World Theory in Gavins 2007a.

³⁹⁰ Gavins 2007b, 8.

³⁹¹ It is pointed out that following Paul Werth's death, “much of the immediate further development of Text World Theory has been concerned with broadening the application of the framework”, and as a result there is “a newly expanded and refined Text World Theory for the twenty-first century”. See Gavins 2007b, 7-8.

³⁹² Werth 1999, 49.

expressed and tacitly accepted and any other propositions evoked by the said propositions from general knowledge or mutual knowledge (though not necessarily expressed).³⁹³ It is posited that the set of propositions actually expressed contains a subset of deictic terms, “denoting place, time, relationships with the speakers, nominated entities and knowledge relating to all of these categories”, and it is this deictic subset which corresponds to the text world.³⁹⁴ A text world is therefore “a deictic space, defined initially by the discourse itself, and specifically by the deictic and referential elements in it.”³⁹⁵ In other words, a text world is “the representation of a specific context for a particular discourse”,³⁹⁶ which is the situation depicted by the discourse, and is text-driven and further fed either by “the experiences remembered by the participants” (i.e. the contents of memory) or by “speculations created by the participants” (i.e. produced by imagination).³⁹⁷ This description of Werth’s “text world” may provide a rough definition to a poetic world/context (a world/context as formed with respect to a particular poem, comparable to Ricour’s “world of the text” to be introduced in a later section) suggested earlier (p. 76 and p. 82), which is based on the **Micro/micro-context** as posited in this thesis.

Werth’s elaboration on **mutual knowledge** is also worthy of mentioning. Since the intersection of speaker-knowledge and hearer-knowledge is crucial in the interpretation of discourse, communication effectively consists of the *transfer of knowledge* possessed by one of the participants into knowledge shared by all participants through a process known as **incrementation**.³⁹⁸ Accordingly, mutual knowledge is the result of incrementation, or “updating”, and “it happens within the shared and jointly negotiated environment of the discourse underway” or “has already happened as the result of some previous discourse”.³⁹⁹ This notion of mutual knowledge, according to Werth, saves it from the problem of infinite regression suggested in, among others, Sperber and Wilson 1986. Besides, Werth regards the notion of “mutual manifestness”, which Sperber and Wilson 1986⁴⁰⁰ considers to be sufficient to explain the degree of shared cognitive environment needed for a hearer to

³⁹³ Ibid., 48 and 49-50.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 48.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 51.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 112.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 87.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 94-95. See n.379 above for a brief description of incrementation.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 95 and 130.

⁴⁰⁰ Werth’s criticism is still valid for Sperber and Wilson 2001, where the notion of “mutual manifestness” remains unchanged.

pick up allusions made by a speaker, as merely underlying the process of interpretation leading up to the beginning of incrementation, while suggesting that the notion of CG duly deals with the process of incrementation and after.⁴⁰¹ As far as mutual knowledge is concerned, this view of Werth's serves to supplement Sperber and Wilson's theory. This transfer of knowledge also agrees with *zaidao*, the conveying of truth/truthfulness as introduced earlier, which is linked to *shiyi*.⁴⁰²

Under Werth's framework, mutual knowledge represents a subcategory of shared knowledge, with general knowledge being another subcategory.⁴⁰³ Since mutual knowledge is, in principle, consisting "solely of knowledge shared by, and available to, the participants in the discourse" concerned, which "may come from the discourse so far, or from previous shared discourses", it is essentially private knowledge.⁴⁰⁴ Werth's anchoring knowledge to private knowledge is in agreement to, and can contribute to the formation of, our concept of **Micro/micro-context**.

In contrast, general knowledge, or public knowledge, consists of "all that information which is in principle available to all individuals by virtue of their membership in various larger social groupings", and can be sub-divided into cultural knowledge and linguistic knowledge. Cultural knowledge refers to "all the non-linguistic information available to individuals or groups living in a particular society", which is particularly structured, open-ended and contingent. Linguistic knowledge is "the type of general knowledge underlying the use of language" that is structured, systematic and analytical.⁴⁰⁵ This general knowledge is comparable to

⁴⁰¹ Werth 1999, 95-96. Here on 95, Werth explains that according to Sperber and Wilson 1986, speakers and hearers "do not operate on the basis of mutually known facts, but rather on assumptions about each other's cognitive environments", i.e. the set of facts manifest to the individual concerned, where "manifest" means "potentially available to a person's awareness" (or "capable of being perceived by a participant in the discourse", as explained on 92, n.9). Werth, however, rightly points out on 96 that "any facts which come into the cognitive environment as a result of the discourse are *known* rather than just manifest, and may be used in subsequent interpretation as part of the CG" (italics in original).

⁴⁰² A distinction is of course noted between knowledge and truth(fulness). Cf. Rescher 2009, 56-57, where it is suggested that "the domain of fact [knowledge about the real] is ampler than that of truth [instances of which are statable and bound to textuality and thereby cannot be more than countably infinite] so that language cannot capture the entirety of fact".

⁴⁰³ Werth 1999, 96.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 98-99.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 96-98.

our **Macro-context**, and cultural knowledge and linguistic knowledge can be comparable to our **macro-context**. However, Werth has not spelt out how his general knowledge can be absorbed into his CG, and his general knowledge is composed *only* by his cultural knowledge and linguistic knowledge, which does not agree with our definitions.

Now, return to CG, which is the specific context for a particular discourse, and is defined as “the totality of information which the speaker(s) and hearer(s) have agreed to accept as relevant for their discourse”.⁴⁰⁶ It is noted that CG is constantly shifting as the discourse proceeds, as “new information is constantly being added, and often old information is modified or decays in the light of later propositions”.⁴⁰⁷ This provides a theoretical basis for working out the relationship between the **Macro/macro-context** and the **Micro/micro-context**.

In summary, Werth’s Text World Theory represents efforts to offer an intricate and comprehensive framework for analysing a text. However, the application of Text World Theory, whether in Werth 1999, Gavins 2007b or Gavins 2007a, seems unable to account fully for the literariness of a literary text.⁴⁰⁸ At best, therefore, Werth’s theory serves as a powerful analysing tool without the specific literary orientation needed for the purposes of this thesis. Nevertheless, Werth’s elaboration on “context” and “mutual knowledge” in particular is essential to filling the loopholes left by relevance theory, though his treatment of “context” still lacks the concrete details that can be referred to while analysing a text.

Therefore, it seems neither Text World Theory nor relevance theory can cover the whole process of interpretation. And a natural orientation of this thesis is to combine the two, or rather incorporate Werth’s treatment of “context” and “mutual knowledge” into relevance theory, which is regarded as more appropriate for the purposes of this thesis.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 119.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 120.

⁴⁰⁸ Gavins’ essay, for instance, does try to explain how a sense of ambiguity may be created by the simultaneous conceptualisation of many worlds as formulated in the closing stanza of the poem under analysis, but it fails to offer more insight into the workings of the underlying mechanism, or ambiguity itself. See Gavins 2007a, 143.

2.3.C.3 Other Theories of Language

Among numerous theories of language, those on **vagueness** are most relevant to the pursuit of this thesis. As Timothy Williamson puts it simply, “[a]lthough we can make our language less vague, we cannot make it perfectly precise”.⁴⁰⁹ That is why vagueness has intrigued logicians, semanticists and philosophers alike. An example given to illustrate the concept is the question “when did Rembrandt become old?”, to which we cannot give an answer as precise as by the second.⁴¹⁰ This has significant implications as to the capability of language in accurately expressing human ideas and/or concepts, and hence also the meaning intended by a speaker or an author. On the other hand, except for exposing the limitations of ordinary language in terms of its accuracy of expression, the problem of vagueness also poses a question about the potential of poetic language in delivery of subtle meanings.

Besides its relevance to interpretation, vagueness is also of interest to this thesis as, similar to such concepts as poetry and light, vagueness is usually discussed in terms of its related phenomena. Williamson suggests that we might agree to define such terms as light and poetry by examples “in order not to talk past each other when disagreeing about the nature” of such terms, so we can agree to do the same in the case of vagueness.⁴¹¹ As far as this thesis is concerned, a definition of *shiyi* has been preliminarily proposed, which will be revised as appropriate, but such a definition of this abstract concept will only illuminate provided that a supplementary account is given through an analysis of examples as its “phenomena”. For the time being, we have to endure that discussions in early chapters in this thesis have to be carried on even before better and final definitions are given to our abstract key terms including *shiyi*. Thus, the research on vagueness has also implications on how the theory of *shiyi* should be formulated. (Re. proposed theory of *shiyi*.)

2.3.C.4 Summary

Section 2.3.C further introduces relevance theory, which is found relevant to the pursuit of this thesis considering that valuation by means of *shiyi* is about selecting from the context those relevant elements conducive to maximisation of *shiyi*. Besides, some criticisms levelled at relevance theory from the perspective of Text

⁴⁰⁹ Williamson 1994, 1. See also Chao 1959, 654 for a simple elaboration of “vague”: “A symbol is vague in so far as its borderline cases of applicability loom large in comparison with its clear cases”.

⁴¹⁰ Williamson 1994, 1-2.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 2.

World Theory are summarised, so as to clarify the theoretical cogency of the former. With the criticisms and possible solutions and/or corrections, especially those concerning themes, context and knowledge, taken into consideration, it is still advised to adopt relevance theory endowed with theoretical simplicity as one candidate for formulating an integrated approach in a later section. The CG as posited in Text World Theory, for instance, is poised to lend a theoretical basis for conceptualisation and theorisation of the relationship between the **Macro/macro-context** and the **Micro/micro-context**. In addition, the implications of the problem of vagueness on this thesis, which include those on the distinction between ordinary language and poetic language and those on formulation of a proposed theory of *shiyi*, are laid down.

2.3.D HERMENEUTICS:

In order to investigate the interpretation problem of poetry, hermeneutics as a discipline dedicated to the study of interpretation should be consulted as necessary. In the following, a brief introduction, derived from the philosophical perspective, will be given to the central figure of modern hermeneutics, Hans-Georg Gadamer, as well as Paul Ricoeur. Their respective adaptability and applicability in this thesis will also be given. Approaches of Chinese hermeneutics that are deemed relevant to this thesis will be outlined, and Hans Robert Jauss's hermeneutics will be touched on with regard to its role in bridging hermeneutics and literary study. Jürgen Habermas, a philosopher/sociologist more akin to those in the critical tradition, will also be included with special respect to his critique of Gadamer.

2.3.D.1 Gadamer's Hermeneutics

Despite great names such as Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)⁴¹² before him, Hans-Georg

⁴¹² Heidegger's theory can be a good candidate for incorporation into a hermeneutical theory, but not our theory for poetry assessment. According to Lawrence K. Schmidt, having combined Husserl's method of phenomenological research with aspects of Dilthey's theory of understanding life, Heidegger is understood to have maintained that our knowledge of entities should build on our prior understanding of the meaning of being and particularly the meaning of the being of human beings, and thus his emphasis on first giving a phenomenological description of how human beings are in actual life, which is then subjected to a hermeneutic examination. (2006, 7). Such philosophy of Heidegger's depicts his ontological and/or metaphysical inclinations much more than his interest in an understanding theory. It is Gadamer who turned hermeneutics to its road of understanding again, and

Gadamer is generally acknowledged as “responsible for our thinking about hermeneutics today in contemporary [Western] philosophy”.⁴¹³

Gadamer suggests that understanding necessarily involves prejudices we inherit from the tradition and is necessarily hermeneutic in nature as we cannot escape the hermeneutic circle.⁴¹⁴ This restoration of a historical and/or traditional dimension is clearly a diversion away from, say, Heidegger’s phenomenological method. His famous notion of the fusion of horizons is used to describe what understanding goes through by means of a fusion of the so-called past horizon of the text with the present horizon of the one who understands.⁴¹⁵ Accordingly, the central problem of hermeneutics concerns how, through the fusion of horizons, a text is brought to speak in the interpreter’s newly expanded horizon.⁴¹⁶ This is considered to be related to conceptualisation of the relationship between the actual world and the created world, as well as that between the **Macro/macro-context** and the **Micro/micro-context**.

Gadamer argues that through the process of understanding which he compares to a conversation, the interpreter must listen to and respect the views of the other person, and correct understanding is achieved when after various positions are examined one of them is agreed on by all.⁴¹⁷ His conclusion is that hermeneutic understanding can reveal and guarantee truths that the scientific method cannot.⁴¹⁸ This, however, in a way agrees with our purported distinction between truth and truthfulness, as it is only truthfulness, rather than truth (including scientific truths), that we can hopefully arrive at through such negotiations by means of changing positions between the two parties concerned. Hence, Gadamer’s truth can be compared to our truthfulness.

hence the relevance of his theory to this thesis.

⁴¹³ See Lawrence Schmidt 2006, 8. On 2, Schmidt also says that the “philosophical meaning of hermeneutics today is primarily determined by” Gadamer in his *Truth and Method*. For detail, see the introduction chapter of Lawrence Schmidt 2006, 1-9, which provides a concise overview of modern hermeneutics.

⁴¹⁴ Gadamer 2004, 269-272 and 484. This prejudice, which means “a judgment that is rendered before all the elements that determine a situation have been finally examined” (ibid., 273) as mentioned in Chapter 1, is of course part of the basis for formulation of a hypothesis.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid, 305.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, 305-306. N.B.: Habermas aptly describes how the fusion works as follows: “the dialectical confrontation of what is one’s own with what is foreign leads [...] to revisions” (1990, 217).

⁴¹⁷ Gadamer 2004, 387, 390.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, 484.

Despite attacks and criticisms levelled at his theory in general by a number of scholars, including Habermas and Ricoeur, whose ideas will shortly be introduced, Gadamer's above views on truths can be a source of inspiration to our formulation of a theory of *shiyi*.

2.3.D.2 Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics

Paul Ricoeur, an important contemporary French philosopher in the phenomenological and hermeneutical tradition,⁴¹⁹ does not consider hermeneutics to be merely exegesis.⁴²⁰ He contends that the purpose of all interpretation is to conquer the distance between the interpreter and the past cultural epoch to which the text belongs, whereby he can make himself contemporary with the text, thus converting something foreign into familiar, appropriating its meaning to himself, and making it his own. Accordingly, every hermeneutics is, explicitly or implicitly, self-understanding by means of understanding others.⁴²¹ This "self-understanding by means of understanding others", by means of "converting something foreign into familiar", is of particular relevance to this thesis with respect to our deliberation on the dichotomy of **familiarity** and unfamiliarity, as well as the function and value of literature, including poetry.

Later, Ricoeur further explicates hermeneutics in terms of its twofold task, which is "to reconstruct the internal dynamic of the text, and to restore to the work its ability to project itself outside itself in the representation of a world that I could inhabit".⁴²² For the internal dynamic of the text, Ricoeur is referring to the "sense" of the text, as for the ability to project itself, he is referring to the "reference" of the text, or the "world of the text". It is this "world of the text", which is something the text projects not behind but in front of itself, and which makes the text meaningful in the first place, giving it both sense and reference. Hence, to understand a text depends on grasping the world of a text as one that I or we can imagine myself or ourselves inhabiting. As the "I's" or "we" in question differ over time, so too the meaning of the text as appropriated will differ in some way from time to time and place to

⁴¹⁹ Ricoeur suggests that he belongs to this "phenomenological and hermeneutical tradition". See Ricoeur 1991, 1.

⁴²⁰ He points out that the hermeneutic problem has, since the time of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, become a philosophical problem. See Ricoeur 2004b, 5.

⁴²¹ Ibid, 16.

⁴²² See Ricoeur 1991, 18.

place.⁴²³ And it is in this sense that Ricoeur's theory is considered to have a reader-centred tendency. As can be seen, Ricoeur's "world of the text" bears some similarity to Liu's "world" introduced earlier, and may be adapted to support Liu's poetics with a hermeneutic basis, so as to form a poetic world/context (a world/context as formed with respect to a particular poem being read) based on the **Micro/micro-context** as posited in this thesis.

According to Ricoeur, it is the "world of the text" that intervenes in the world of action in order to give it a new configuration or to transfigure it,⁴²⁴ and the working of such transfiguration can be illuminated by the study of metaphor.⁴²⁵ His idea is that the poetic function of language can achieve indirect functioning of metaphorical reference by suspending the referential function of language, because the poetic function stresses the message for its own sake at the expense of the referential function, which is dominant in descriptive language. Since the suspension of the referential function is in fact the negative condition of a more concealed referential function of discourse that is set free when the descriptive value of statements is suspended, poetic discourse is said to be able to bring to language aspects, qualities and values of reality that do not have access to directly descriptive language and that can be said only by virtue of the complex play of the metaphorical utterance and of the ordered transgression of the ordinary meaning of our words.⁴²⁶ As Ricoeur observes, "poetic language redescribes the world thanks to the suspension of direct description by way of objective language".⁴²⁷ Once again reminding us of Liu's "world", this notion of Ricoeur's concerning the redescription of the world by means of poetic language is particularly relevant to the interpretation problem investigated in this thesis, and may specifically offer a comparable yet competitive theory to relevance theory, which concentrates rather on the use of implicature. Ricoeur's theory also has a bearing on the distinctiveness of poetic language that may be related to a possible characterisation by *shiyi*.

Given that "poetic language redescribes the world", literature may accordingly

⁴²³ Pellauer 2007, 61.

⁴²⁴ See Ricoeur 1991, 10. Ricoeur refers to this concept in the study of fiction, but the concept can readily be applied to poetry.

⁴²⁵ Ricoeur 1991, 10.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 10-11. In other words, poetic language can force us to "rework our conventional concept of truth, [...] to cease to limit this concept to logical coherence and empirical verification alone, so that the truth claim related to transfiguring action of fiction can be taken into account" (ibid.).

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

be defined as written discourse with the capacity to redescribe the world for its readers.⁴²⁸ The text-reader dialectic for criticism in turn results in the transformation of interpretation into a dynamic dialectic between the distancing of the text and the appropriation of the reader, where “distancing” means the semantic autonomy of the text (which stands removed from its unknown multiple readers), while “appropriation” means the process of making one’s own what was not.⁴²⁹ In contrast with relevance theory, *writing* holds a significant position in Ricoeur’s model. It is through writing that discourse acquires a threefold semantic autonomy, which is “in relation to the speaker’s intention, to its reception by its original audience, and to the economic, social, and cultural circumstances of its production”.⁴³⁰

The vital concepts introduced above underlie Ricoeur’s theory of interpretation characterised by his “hermeneutical circle”. This hermeneutical circle includes the three stages of “comprehension/understanding”, “explanation” and “understanding”.⁴³¹ In delineating his interpretation theory, Ricoeur states that structuralism could serve the purpose of “explanation”.⁴³² The shortcoming in this view is that, theoretically, it is far from cogent and convincing to stress the importance of keeping the system open in the first and third stages, while allowing the second stage to remain closed as in the case of structuralism,⁴³³ except for the use of fulfilling a desire of accommodating a then prevalent methodology in his “all-encompassing” theory.⁴³⁴ Accordingly, relevance theory, as introduced earlier, could very well be a better alternative than structuralism in Ricoeur’s hermeneutical circle.

⁴²⁸ Valdés 1991b, 8.

⁴²⁹ Ibid. Ricoeur also remarks that “semantic autonomy” of the text results from “the disconnection of the mental intention of the author from the verbal meaning of the text”. And of tremendous importance to hermeneutics is this concept of semantic autonomy, with which exegesis begins. See Ricoeur 1976, 29-30.

⁴³⁰ Ricoeur 1991, 17.

⁴³¹ Ricoeur 1976, 74-79.

⁴³² Ibid., 86-87.

⁴³³ This is a logical deduction from the idea of Ricoeur, who accepts that structuralism is characterised by a “closed” system. See Ricoeur 1976, 5-6, and n.335 above for his view in more detail.

⁴³⁴ An analogy given here for comparison is the special case of Relativity which applies suitably when the system under investigation is kept closed throughout the process. But should the system include periods during which it is not closed to the larger world, there is no justification whatsoever for keeping any period for closed-system analysis.

On the other hand, given its inherent flexibility and comprehensiveness, Ricoeur's "distanciation-appropriation" dialectic may be constituted to lend support to the proposed subtlety-unintelligibility continuum (re. **Argument 2**). Ricoeur's notion of the "world", however, is not supplying any explanatory details as regards how, and under what mechanism, the "world" is actually formed. This suggests that his theory can still benefit from insights from theories of cognitive linguistics (say Text World Theory, which generates a more detailed account of "world"). Besides, his notion of "self-understanding by means of understanding others", a comparatively reader-orientated approach can be balanced or complemented by a somewhat speaker-centred approach such as relevance theory.⁴³⁵

2.3.D.3 Hans Robert Jauss's Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is also one of Jauss's focal points. Opposing Barthes's "naive fusing of horizon" in his analysis of the reception of a Poe story,⁴³⁶ Jauss argues that literary hermeneutics has a role to play in the concretisation of the meaning of literary works, which develops historically within a framework of a certain "logic" that "precipitates in the formation and transformation of the aesthetic canon".⁴³⁷ This significance attached to the canon, of course, is intended to reduce the openness of a text to excessively free interpretation. In essence, according to Jauss, hermeneutics is a critical element in "the change of horizons of the interpretations" that can absolutely differentiate "between arbitrary interpretations and those available to a consensus" and between "those that are merely original and those that are formative of a norm".⁴³⁸ It is in this way that hermeneutics is closely integrated into literary interpretation, and a historical dimension is thereby restored to interpretation. Linking hermeneutics to literary study, Jauss's reception theory is thus relevant to this thesis.

2.3.D.4 Jürgen Habermas's Critique

⁴³⁵ Cf. Denis Donoghue's suggestion that Ricoeur's approach to speech is emphasising "the intention of saying something to somebody about something", with "saying something about something" getting much attention while "to somebody" getting only slight attention (1981, 122).

⁴³⁶ Jauss rightly points out the contradiction between Barthes's original intention of offering an "unmediated and ahistorical" reading and the actual reading only achievable by a "superreader" say through bringing into play "a comprehensive knowledge of the nineteenth century" (1982, 147).

⁴³⁷ Jauss 1982, 147.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 147-148.

As far as hermeneutics is concerned, Habermas's critique is directed to Gadamer's theory. To Habermas, Gadamer simply underestimates the power of rational force, by which an interpreter can actually discover the genesis of an inherited prejudice and criticise it should it be found illegitimate, thereby breaking the hermeneutic circle and enabling a critique of ideology.⁴³⁹ Clearly, Habermas's idea is politics-oriented, aiming at breaking through from the tradition or status quo. This orientation, however, is unlikely to bring too much insight to literary studies, bearing in mind that without the hermeneutic circle, the basis of learning and gaining of knowledge, there will not be any prejudice in form of a canon and/or a literary tradition for appropriation by new authors and/or poets in terms of **familiarity**. At most, therefore, he can successfully argue for a succession of circles rather than only one at work over time.

2.3.D.5 Chinese Hermeneutics

In fact, it was only after the mid-1980s that scholars in the East and the West began to focus on the Chinese exegetical traditions as a subject of inquiry in its own right, and hermeneutics, a Western term, was used to describe this new emerging field of study.⁴⁴⁰ Still, as Ching-I Tu has quite rightly pointed out, the central focus of hermeneutics of any tradition is scripture, the status of which is only achieved by a text in question through a process of canonisation.⁴⁴¹ This scripture status presupposes a valuation of the text, or the worthwhileness of its interpretation, and is thus in line with the valuation approach as suggested earlier by means of the criterion of *shiyi*.⁴⁴²

In the following, some outstanding theorists in the Chinese tradition, whose analysis and/or approaches are considered relevant to resolving the unintelligibility problem investigated in this thesis, will be introduced.

2.3.D.5.1 Insights from Interpretations of the Confucian Classics

Julia Ching investigates in her essay⁴⁴³ the dialectic in which scholars and the

⁴³⁹ Habermas 1990, 236-237 and 239-240.

⁴⁴⁰ Ching-I Tu 2005b, ix.

⁴⁴¹ Ching-I Tu 2000b, ix.

⁴⁴² This adherence to classics has its implications on the applicability of Chinese traditional hermeneutics to analysis of new poetry, as will be introduced in the next sub-section.

⁴⁴³ Ching 2000.

classics together with commentaries had engaged from early times through the early republican period and by which both parties had been transformed. According to Ching, in the absence of sages, their recorded words have taken their places, with their inspiration stored in the classics to be conveyed by the textual scholar, the exegete. The exegete is necessary because once recorded as text, ideas become fixed and require interpretation.⁴⁴⁴ Ching suggests that the development of exegesis can best be seen in light of diachronic dialogue and dialectic.⁴⁴⁵ As a result of the dialectic, she argues, a Canon supported by centuries of scholarly consensus is formed, even though there is no way to determine the original authorship or condition of the classics.⁴⁴⁶ Despite the consensus, she maintains that as pointed out by the allegorical interpretations of the Han dynasty [such as Dong Zhongshu] and the more spiritual interpretations of the Song and Ming dynasties [such as Song's Wang Anshi], there was an important facet of the Chinese exegetical tradition, which was an openness to new ways of understanding the classical texts. Such openness can be attributed to the Chinese tradition's being more attentive to the spiritual message that transcends the text and is immanent in it.⁴⁴⁷

Ching's essay has a number of implications on this thesis: (1) There is paradoxically an openness to interpretations of the classics in the Chinese tradition, which is applicable to classical poetry in the canon, but probably not to modern poetry, many pieces of which are yet to be granted membership of the canon;⁴⁴⁸ (2) From the perspective of traditional hermeneutics, the value of classical texts has long been established, or recognised, so the aim of a hermeneutic study is to identify, justify or reinforce such value through re-interpretation; but for some modern poetic works, their value is still subject to controversy and debate, and there is not the same departure point for a similar hermeneutic study; and (3) That the Chinese tradition is more attentive to the spiritual message that transcends the text and is immanent in it, is in line with the suggestion that language is both limited and unlimited in expression. The Chinese tradition mentioned above, in turn, can be discussed in terms of **familiarity, Chineseness and micro/macro-context.**

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 134.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 141.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., 150. And on 149, Ching remarks that it is difficult to ascertain the integrity of any entire classical text, including the *Analects*, as free from additions and interpolations.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 151.

⁴⁴⁸ This refers to the canon of Chinese literature. If there is a canon of modern Chinese poetry, some pieces of poetical works will have secured their places there already, notably including those selected for analysis in Chapter 4.

2.3.D.5.2 Insights from Interpretations of the *Shijing* 詩經

After surveying the history of *Shijing* (or *The Book of Poetry*) hermeneutics from the Spring and Autumn period to the present, Kuang Yu Chen discovers that there is an utilitarian nature, whether political, moralistic or educational, in this history, owing to which the question of *Shijing*'s authorship was never seriously discussed until quite recently, and it is due to this ignoring of the question of authorship that more room is left for the reader to interpret the poems and to draw conclusions as he sees fit.⁴⁴⁹

Chen's findings, though based on interpretations of *Shijing* poems rather than classical poetry referred to in this thesis, still have the following implications for the thesis: (1) Without paying too much attention to the authorship problem of a classical text, a reader is able to interpret the text with more freedom, which agrees with the phenomenon as characterised by Ricoeur's distanciation;⁴⁵⁰ (2) The practical use that *Shijing* has been put to during past centuries in itself demonstrates the value attached to literature, and hence the truth conveyed therein, through the tradition,⁴⁵¹ and such value can further be linked to *shiyi*; and (3) Hermeneutics in the Chinese tradition is never meant only for understanding of a text, but also for other meaningful purposes of the readers. Similar to the Section 2.3.D.5.1 above, the Chinese tradition mentioned here can also be discussed in terms of **familiarity**, **Chineseness** and **macro-context**.

2.3.D.5.3 Insights from Zhu Xi's 朱熹 Poetic Hermeneutics

In an essay⁴⁵² examining the poetic hermeneutics of Zhu Xi (1130-1200), one of the most important and original Neo-Confucianist philosopher in Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), Jianhua Chen 陳建華 attempts to accommodate Zhu's

⁴⁴⁹ See Kuang Yu Chen 2005, 58.

⁴⁵⁰ The agreement is not so much as with the result of removing the anchorage of the author by means of consciously or intentionally upholding the Death of the Author.

⁴⁵¹ Value can still be attached to a piece of classical work (or one having secured its place in the canon) in this way, despite doubt concerning who its true author is. The case for *Honglou Meng* 紅樓夢 (Dream of the Red Chamber), one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature, is different: modern scholarship on resolving the controversies surrounding its true author, though a field of research in its own right, is not meant for significantly justifying or contributing to the value of the masterpiece.

⁴⁵² Jianhua Chen 2005.

polemics of the “licentious poems” (*yinshi* 淫詩) in the *Shijing* within his Neo-Confucian philosophy. Quoting what Zhu says in *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Conversations of Master Zhu, Arranged Topically),⁴⁵³ Chen observes Zhu’s emphasis on his perceived fact that words of all sages are rooted in a concrete historical context, so that the interpretation of such words is subject to the law of historicity, and the original meaning of these words is no longer completely accessible to later sages.⁴⁵⁴ As such, Zhu’s acts of reading and interpreting actually “open more venues to dialogue than they provide an absolute truth”.⁴⁵⁵ Besides, the conversations in *Zhuzi yulei* also suggest a tension between Zhu’s will to give absolute answers to the Classics and his uncertainty in giving answers.⁴⁵⁶

Chen’s analysis of Zhu’s poetic hermeneutics is in accord with what hermeneutics is supposed to do: rather than attaining the ultimate truth, hermeneutic pursuits, as dictated by their never-ending nature, will only be able to get closer to it. This necessitates a proposed replacement in the human sciences, including poetics, of the notion of (absolute) **truth** by that of (a sense of) **truthfulness** as the outcome of pursuit, though in natural sciences explorations for knowledge advancement are subject to a similar, yet less precarious, uncertainty limitation characterised by possible and/or forthcoming paradigmatic shifts or falsification attempts.⁴⁵⁷

2.3.D.5.4 Ming Dong Gu’s Literary Openness

Gu points out that the concept of literary openness, which is usually associated with Umberto Eco’s *Opera aperta* (Open Work) published in 1962, was conceived of

⁴⁵³ As cited, Zhu says in chapter 105, titled “On My Own Exegesis” (“Lun zizhu shu”) that “[g]enerally speaking, what the ancient sage said might not be necessarily understood by even another sage born in a later time, because the former sage spoke at a particular time for a specific matter, or he held his opinion based on what he had just seen [...]”. See *ibid.*, 134.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Besides, according to Chen, Zhu theorises on the act of reading and the act of interpreting differently, with the former referring to the reading and understanding of individual poems (as in the case of *The Book of Songs*), and the latter emphasising a critical engagement with commentaries and traditional exegeses. See *ibid.*, 134.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁴⁵⁷ In other words, in natural sciences, *truth* is a term suitable for describing the comparatively certain status of the achieved outcome of pursuit. In human sciences, however, *truthfulness* is the more appropriate term for describing the less certain status of the achieved outcome of pursuit.

much earlier in the Chinese tradition.⁴⁵⁸ Gu, however, observes that openness, such as that of the *Shijing* poems, grew out of the conflict between a canonical critical precept and critical practice. He explains that Confucius, who started the *Shijing* hermeneutic tradition, posited an all-encompassing thematic guideline of “[...] no evil thought” (*Shisanjing zhushu*, 2461) for the *Shijing*, which was accepted by Confucian scholars, who only found that the anthology contains poems which could be considered obscene by Confucian moral standards. To accommodate this discovery, the scholars had to adopt various exegetical methods, which nevertheless led to a multiplicity of readings. As a result, although in theory a text was viewed as a closed entity, in practice it was opened up: literary openness thus grew out of a disjunction between hermeneutic theory and exegetical practice.⁴⁵⁹

Despite a long history since its inception, literary openness has never been systematically explored within the Chinese literary tradition, and an intentionalist theory seemed to prevail in pre-modern Chinese literary thought, according to which a text was an enclosure of words that carried the author’s intention, and the reader was tasked to retrieve that intention.⁴⁶⁰ This seems to suggest interaction of a binary pair of openness and closedness (as closed by intentionalism) in the hermeneutic tradition.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁸ Ming Dong Gu 2003b, 113. In fact, as Gu suggests on the same page, the concept can be traced back to as early as the 4th century B.C. when there appeared in the appended verbalizations [, or *Xici*,] to the *Yijing* (or *The Book of Changes*) the famous saying “[In the interpretation of the Dao,] a benevolent person who sees it will say that it is benevolent; a wise person who sees it will say that it is wise” [*renzhe jianzhi weizhi ren, zhizhe jianzhi weizhi zhi* 仁者見之謂之仁，智者見之謂之智] (*Shisanjing zhushu* [十三經註疏] 78), and to the 2nd century B.C. when Dong Zhongshu articulated the dictum “*shi wu da gu*” (“[The Book of] Poetry has no thorough-going interpretation”, *Chunqiu fanlu*, juan 3, 9a). Of course, another famous text in *Xici* attributed to Confucius, as quoted in n.230, which is more concerned with the dual characteristics of language and interpretation of classics, could be another source of the concept.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 114.

⁴⁶⁰ See *ibid.*, 115, where Gu further suggests that this intentionalist view can be traced back to Mencius, who believed that a poet’s original intention could be recovered through careful reading.

⁴⁶¹ It should be noted that Gu also points out the absence of exact counterparts to the concept of “literary openness” or “open work” in Chinese literary thought (*ibid.*, 118-119). N.B.: Suggestiveness, which is introduced in an earlier sub-section, is what Gu more favours as a working concept than openness. Theoretically, his preference for suggestiveness to openness is not justified, as either concept has its limitations: suggestiveness, as discussed earlier, is more related to how *language* is used to express in a suggestive manner; openness, on the other hand, should be more concerned with how *a*

The implications of Gu's essay to this thesis are: (1) Openness may be the unexpected result of conflicts between canonical critical precepts and critical practice, which further suggests a link between openness and a canon, and hence **micro-context/macro-context**; (2) Intentionalism, which can be dealt with by *shiyi*, was considered useful for retrieving the intention of the author, and hence the correct meaning, or the truth, of the text.

2.3.D.6 Summary

A survey of the hermeneutics in the two traditions has identified a number of theoretical threads through which the **unintelligibility** problem can be put into clearer perspectives. Intentionalism, an approach focusing on recovering the author's intention with a view to locating the correct meaning, is practised in the Chinese literary hermeneutic tradition. Such an approach, however, can be absorbed and dealt with satisfactorily by the proposed criterion of *shiyi*. Taking Zhu Xi's tension between his will to know and uncertainty to answer into consideration, it is possible to posit the **truth** vs. **truthfulness** relationship that can be used to highlight the uniqueness of human sciences. Gadamer holds that understanding necessarily involves prejudices we inherit from the tradition and is necessarily hermeneutic in nature as we cannot escape the hermeneutic circle.⁴⁶² This can be conceptualised together with the proposed pair of concept of **Macro/macro-context** and **Micro/micro-context**. His fusion of horizons, a fusion of the past horizon of the text with the present horizon of the reader, is relevant to James Liu's **world**, as well as the understanding process characterised by the concept of **(un)familiarity**. Gadamer's conclusion that hermeneutic understanding can reveal and guarantee truths that the scientific method cannot is probably overstated, but with the never-ending

reader is allowed to interpret a text in a liberal manner.

⁴⁶² As Patrick Rogers Horn (2005, 12) suggests, Gadamer's use of the ordinary term prejudice (*Vorurteil*) came from Martin Heidegger's technical term fore-meaning (*Vormeinung*) in *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*), but R. E. Palmer (1994, 261) highlights the distinction in this inheritance in that "[...] the *justification of prejudice* (*Vorurteil*) in *Wahrheit und Methode* [*Truth and Method*] was probably the 'last straw' for Heidegger, as Gadamer redirected Heidegger's radical attack on modernity, his 'step back' from representational thought, his project of a deconstruction of the language of metaphysics, into a [...] dialectical-hermeneutical *defence of tradition* against scientism and 'the subjectivizing of aesthetics since Kant'" (italics in original). In other words, Gadamer's contribution stems from his reoriented application of prejudice in developing hermeneutics, or from, in Palmer's words, his "using Heidegger [in] rehabilitat[ing] truth in art and literature" (1994, 261).

negotiations hermeneutics can be relied on to continuously improve on **truthfulness**. According to Ricoeur, the purpose of all interpretation is to overcome the distance between the interpreter and the past cultural epoch to which the text belongs, whereby he can make himself contemporary with the text, thus making something foreign into familiar, appropriating its meaning to himself, and making it his own. Every hermeneutics is, therefore, self-understanding by means of understanding others, which is of particular relevance to this thesis with respect to our deliberation on the concept of **(un)familiarity**, as well as the **function** and/or **value** of literature, including poetry. Ricoeur's "**world of the text**" may be adapted to support Liu's **world** with a hermeneutic basis, so as to form a poetic world (with respect to a particular poem) based on the **Macro/micro-context**. Through his study of metaphor, Ricoeur suggests that poetic discourse is able to bring to language aspects, qualities and values of reality that do not have access to directly descriptive language. This is related to how *shiyi* can be derived through poetic language. The three stages of "comprehension/understanding", "explanation" and "understanding" of Ricoeur's "hermeneutical circle" may well be considered and/or adapted for operational procedures for poetry analysis. As for Jauss's reception theory, it is relevant to this thesis as it effectively links hermeneutics to literary study through incorporating a historical dimension into interpretation.

The long hermeneutic tradition in China has seen development of a number of concepts and/or approaches that are relevant to this thesis, too. Julia Ching's essay, for instance, has the following implications: (1) There is an openness to interpretations of the classics in the Chinese tradition/canon, and hence its relevance to **micro-context** and **macro-context**; (2) The **value** of classical texts has long been established, or recognised, so the aim of a hermeneutic study is to identify, justify or reinforce such value through re-interpretation; but for some modern poetic works whose value is still subject to controversy and debate, there is not the same departure point for a similar hermeneutic study; and (3) That the Chinese tradition is more attentive to the spiritual message that transcends the text and is immanent in it, is in line with the suggestion that language is both **limited** and **unlimited** in its expression. Attention is also drawn to the Chinese tradition, which can enter into analysis in terms of **familiarity**, **Chineseness** and **micro/macro-context**. Kuang Yu Chen's essay, in contrast, has the following implications: (1) Without paying too much attention to the authorship problem of a classical text, a reader is able to interpret the text with more freedom, which agrees with the phenomenon as characterised by Ricoeur's distanciation; (2) The practical use that *Shijing* has been put to during past centuries in itself demonstrates the **value** attached to, and hence the **truth** conveyed in, literature

by the tradition; and (3) Hermeneutics in the Chinese tradition is never meant only for understanding of a text, but also for other meaningful purposes of the readers. Jianhua Chen's essay on Zhu Xi has shed light on what hermeneutics is supposed to do: as dictated by their never-ending nature, hermeneutic pursuits will only be able to get closer to, rather than attain, the ultimate **truth**.⁴⁶³ This necessitates a proposed replacement in the human sciences of the notion of (absolute) **truth** by that of (a sense of) **truthfulness** as the outcome of pursuit.⁴⁶⁴ The implications of Gu's essay to this thesis are: (1) Openness may be the unexpected result of conflicts between canonical critical precepts and critical practice, which further suggests a link between openness and a canon, and hence **micro-context** and **macro-context**; (2) Intentionalism, which can be dealt with by *shiyi*, was considered useful for recovering the intention of the author, and hence the correct meaning, or the truth, of the text.

2.3.E PREVIOUS RESEARCH EFFORTS IN A SIMILAR DIRECTION:

In this section, studies and researches in a similar direction as the pursuit in the thesis will be introduced, so as to enable the present research to build firmly on past research efforts. As much as the current research's focus is concerned, there does not exist in the currently available literature any research whose efforts can be considered as exactly in the same direction. Many studies identified are more concerned with one or two focused areas of this thesis, including **Chineseness** in Chinese literature, comparative studies in the two sub-genres of Chinese poetry, comparative studies in traditional Chinese and **vernacular** Chinese, studies specialised in particular poets, and application of relevance theory or other Western theories in the study of poetry. Adrian Pilkington, for instance, applies relevance theory to the study of **poetic effects** in his *Poetic Effects*. Markus Tendahl's *A Hybrid Theory of Metaphor*, on the other hand, posits a new theory on metaphor

⁴⁶³ It is important to note here that this is supposed to apply to classic texts that contain the highest truth which is fully accessible only to sages, so neither are the authors of these texts comparable with other authors or with the average readers nor are these texts and their interpretations in any way comparable to other texts and their interpretation procedures. However, it is possible to argue that this traditional hermeneutics applicable to the classics including the *Book of Poetry* can, by extension, be applied to poetry whose value has been highly assessed, if such value is closely tied to truth-seeking.

⁴⁶⁴ Intuitively, this seems quite straightforward given Sperber and Wilson's definition of context, which is "a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world", where "[i]t is these assumptions, [...] rather than the actual state of the world, that affect the interpretation of an utterance" (2001, 15).

based on relevance theory and cognitive linguistics. In *A Snowy Morning: Eight Chinese Poets on the Road to Modernity*, Michel Hockx tries to incorporate Wolfgang Iser and H.R. Jauss's "esthetics of reception" in his study of eight modern poets. In addition, Tu Wei-ming, Rey Chow, Michelle Yeh and Wang Gungwu, among others, have each offered their insights regarding the concept of **Chineseness**. All of these are critically considered below with reference to their applicability to this thesis.

2.3.E.1 Adrian Pilkington

In his *Poetic Effects: A Relevance Theory Perspective*,⁴⁶⁵ Pilkington offers "a pragmatic account of the effects achieved by the poetic use of rhetorical tropes and schemes",⁴⁶⁶ with a view to contributing to the pragmatics of poetic style by "developing work on stylistic effects in relevance theory",⁴⁶⁷ as well as to literary studies by "proposing a theoretical account of literariness in terms of mental representations and mental processes".⁴⁶⁸ He considers that poetic effects "cannot be characterised simply in propositional terms", because besides consisting of sets of assumptions or propositional forms, poetic thoughts also "involve the communication of nonpropositional effects of various kinds", whose precise nature is difficult to determine.⁴⁶⁹ This highlights the difficulty in defining poetic effect, or its similar concept *shiyi*, as is briefly suggested in Chapter 1. Facing this difficulty, Pilkington asserts that relevance theory not only offers "a more sophisticated pragmatic account of poetic effects in terms of implicatures", but also "recognises and suggests an explanation for the problem of the communication of nonpropositional effects". Another advantage of relevance theory, he continues, is that it can "offer genuine theoretical explanations for the linguistic choices that poets make (as well as for our stylistic intuitions as readers) in terms of mental representations and processes, in terms of thoughts and thinking".⁴⁷⁰ In other words, relevance theory is considered to be able to account for the main mechanism of how literature (including poetry) works,

⁴⁶⁵ Pilkington 2000.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., back cover.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid. Pilkington begins by critiquing the various approaches, such as the formalist approach, the structuralist approach, the semiotic approach, Roman Jakobson's account of literariness, Jonathan Culler's notion of literary competence, Siegfried Schmidt's reading conventions, reader-oriented approaches, the poststructuralist approach, etc. in chap. 2 of his book. His comments will be referred to and commented on wherever appropriate in this thesis.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., "Introduction", xi.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., xii.

and hence its relevance to this thesis.

Pilkington focuses his attention on “small-scale poetic effects”, which are “achieved by individual rhetorical devices rather than by complete poems or extended passages of literary prose”.⁴⁷¹ As such, he considers “poetic effects” to be one kind of stylistic effects that can, but not necessarily, be caused and/or communicated by verse features (such as metre, alliteration, rhyme, etc.), tropes (such as poetic metaphor) and schemes (such as poetic epizeuxis), and are characterised “in terms of a process that involve[s] a wide range of assumptions being simultaneously made marginally more salient”.⁴⁷² Although Pilkington considers that his approach will “ultimately prove applicable to literary communication in general, [and] suggest a new basis for a theory of literariness”,⁴⁷³ his definition of poetic effects has actually been narrowed down to some kind of stylistic effect having very limited and indirect influence on poetry interpretation. As such, as far as poetry assessment is concerned, his piecemeal treatment of poems in terms of poetic effects has rendered his findings applicable to parts rather than the whole of the literary mechanism of poetry.⁴⁷⁴ This necessitates the adoption of a more comprehensive, holistic approach than Pilkington’s as the basis of poetry analysis.

Besides, Pilkington contends that, in order to develop a theoretical approach, it is important to “concentrate on *literariness* as a form of aesthetic experience, which is universal, rather than *literature*, which is a cultural notion”.⁴⁷⁵ His approach is “an account of real mental representations and real mental processes that are triggered when a literary text is read, or [...] when a rhetorical device is used to create poetic

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., xiii.

⁴⁷² Ibid., 47, 131 and 141. Such a definition is deemed lacking in explanatory power as far as poetry assessment is concerned, though his target is probably more on stylistic effects which he calls poetic effects. On 160, he even highlights a direct link between poetic effects and emotion, which is unnecessarily complicating the matter.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., “Introduction”, xiii.

⁴⁷⁴ For instance, he suggests that one possible explanation for stylistic effects due to rhyming is that “the presence of rhyme, which generally combines phonetically identical material with strong stress, facilitates exploration of encyclopaedic entries” (ibid., 138), but he fails to account for how such effects really matter *directly* in any mechanism of production of his poetic effects. So at most, his approach can only locate a *very weak link* between rhyming (or other similar stylistic devices) and his poetic effects (not to mention *shiyi*).

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 12, italics in original.

effects”.⁴⁷⁶ He further suggests, much in line with relevance theory and its underlying pragmatic approach introduced earlier, that “[t]he comprehension of literary works clearly requires potential access to anything that is stored in memory, as does language understanding more generally”⁴⁷⁷ and that “[a] context is not simply a pre-given connected set of ideas, but is constructed as part of the interpretation process”.⁴⁷⁸ Pilkington’s emphasis on “*literariness* as a form of aesthetic experience”⁴⁷⁹ is, however, effectively putting a wedge between literariness and literature. His separation of literariness from literature as such is obviously problematic, as the two words are very much explained in terms of one another, and there can never be any literariness without the concrete literature in black and white. Furthermore, it can be argued that literature as a cultural notion is testimony to the fact that culture could be a source of literariness, and hence the argument for a cultural-literary **macro-context** in this thesis. Since mental representations and mental processes are “triggered” by a text that is read or by a rhetorical device that is used, their analysis is not to be complete if the text is simply bracketed, or if the rhetorical device is analysed without considering the context where it is used. Any study of literariness which claims to have cast away “literature”, or its accompanying cultural notion, can therefore never be as illuminating as it is intended to be. Pilkington’s direction is thus theoretically untenable and not appropriate to the pursuit of this thesis.

2.3.E.2 Markus Tendahl’s *A Hybrid Theory of Metaphor*⁴⁸⁰

Tendahl’s book presents his proposed hybrid theory of metaphors based on central ideas from relevance theory and cognitive linguistics.⁴⁸¹ After thoroughly comparing and contrasting the claims made by relevance theorists and cognitive linguists in Chapters 2 to 4, a few examples, e.g. an utterance containing the word “tree”, are given in Chapter 5, where his hybrid theory is put to test.

As he analyses, on hearing “tree”, the hearer is said to access the conceptual region TREE, part of which consists of elements which are stable across contexts, including the stable assumptions about trees entrenched in a language and cultural

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 27.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 38.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 12, italics in original.

⁴⁸⁰ Tendahl 2009.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 3.

community, though also individually bound to some degree. There may also be in the conceptual region some empty slots with connectors to other knowledge structures, with the connectors being partly entrenched in the language and cultural community and partly individually bound, as well as connectors to conceptual metaphors and metonymies.⁴⁸² Now, for the sentence “Ruud is a tree”, which is an instance of category-crossing metaphor as the main relevance is not dependent on the assumptions and images in the lexical concept, the lexical concept is still important as it provides access to the conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS. Accordingly, certain attributes of trees will be mapped to the target domain PEOPLE, which will then supply those attributes eventually figuring in the ad hoc concept *tree*. The sentence is perceived as metaphorical, because the main relevance to the ad hoc concept *tree* is dependent on its profiling against the target domain PEOPLE rather than the inherent domain PLANTS.⁴⁸³ For the identification of an inherent domain, Tendahl suggests that the usual use of words according to past experience determines which domains are inherent to a conceptual region, so that, for instance, our past experience of the word *tree* certainly informs us the extension of this nature-kind term covers elements from the domain PLANTS. He has also highlighted the possible processing difficulties of metaphorical utterances that occur when the metaphorical ad hoc concept cannot be embedded in a context, which means that the hearer has to search for a relevant context, which may cause extra processing effort.⁴⁸⁴

Such is a much simplified example of analysis conducted according to Tendahl’s model. Obviously, the jargon looks impressively scientific, at least cognitively scientific, but such explanatory analysis can almost be done without any loss of essence by means of an ordinary literary analysis (say, “tree” is seen in terms of its possible human nature, or a human is compared to a tree with regard to its features) if the focus is the perceived actual cognitive and/or rhetorical effect on the part of the hearer (or reader in case of literature or poetry reading), rather than the deepest mechanism claimed to be taking place in his brain. Working at the level as deep as his analysis, Tendahl’s model will therefore be considered intellectually informative yet unnecessarily complicated for a **general reader**, given the principle of relevance. His elaboration on processing difficulty, though, is relevant to this thesis and offers a scientific view on how more processing effort has to be expended in this case. Still, his model has not succeeded to satisfactorily account for his literariness, not to mention our *shiyi*.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 203-204.

⁴⁸³ See *ibid.*, 218-219 for the above analysis in more technical detail.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 219-220.

2.3.E.3 Michel Hockx's *A Snowy Morning: Eight Chinese Poets on the Road to Modernity*

In this classic study of eight early new poets with emphasis placed on their joint collection *A Snowy Morning* (1922), Hockx has adopted an approach whose insight came from Wolfgang Iser and H. R. Jauss, advocates of “esthetics of reception”. In a nutshell, Hockx has incorporated the views and comments of a number of scholars and poets on each poem under analysis, apparently taking them as representative “reader’s response”.⁴⁸⁵ The problem of his approach, to put it simply, is its over-emphasis on the significance of the views of his chosen scholars and poets, and its implied narrow definition of reader. Apparently, his “reader’s response” is the response of his favoured group of *learned* readers, whom he has not tried to properly define.

In contrast to Hockx, this thesis, more in line with but not exactly according to Iser and Jauss, attempts to present responses from the well-defined **general reader’s** point of view, thereby encompassing as much as possible the responses of the intended readers of a literary text in general, and the rationale for this will be further explained in Chapter 3.

2.3.E.4 Chineseness

Chineseness can be a problematic concept.⁴⁸⁶ There is no single equivalent in the Chinese language for the English word “Chinese” that can encompass its denotation, so instead a cluster of terms in Chinese are used to reflect its various attributes.⁴⁸⁷ This is nothing strange considering the backdrop of the emergence of

⁴⁸⁵ See Hockx 1994, 24-25 for a brief introduction to his approach.

⁴⁸⁶ Thus far, **Chineseness** is, according to n.117, defined as “the characteristics of the culture of a community of Chinese-speaking people”. This definition is not entirely satisfactory, but until it is revised, the continued use of it is unavoidable, given the presentation of literature according to the current rundown, and the fact that the key terms used specifically in this thesis, including but not limited to Chineseness, are meant for mutually illuminating.

⁴⁸⁷ These include 中國人/華人 (Chinese people) for racial Chinese, 中華/華夏 (Han or *Huaxia* civilisation) for cultural Chinese, 漢族/漢人 (Han people) for ethnic Chinese, and 中國籍 (Chinese citizenship) for Chinese citizenry. See Anbin Shi 2003b, 20. N.B.: Throughout Anbin Shi 2003a,

the modern concept of Chineseness. Such a concept of Chineseness, as well as that of Chinese, was not developed until the Sino-British Opium War (1839-42), and a clear-cut definition of Chinese ethnicity and/or national identity was only called for by intellectuals' two-fold mission of enlightenment and national salvation in the face of a national crisis.⁴⁸⁸ Accordingly, such imported concepts as "nation, state, sovereignty, citizenry, race, ethnicity, and national/cultural identity" had all to be dealt with, and the definition of Chineseness had therefore become part of the agenda of constructing Chinese modernity.⁴⁸⁹ In the following, theories and/or concepts on Chineseness introduced are mainly for purposes specific to the respective disciplines their proponents belong, rather than used specifically for literary studies. As for Rey Chow, who tries to examine the use of the Chineseness concept in literary studies, she also fails to provide a satisfactory model for this thesis for reasons explained below.

Tu Wei-ming, a historian and philosopher, suggests a concept of "cultural China" in explaining Chineseness, or being Chinese in his words, in his book chapter on cultural studies.⁴⁹⁰ He considers that the question of Chineseness "entails both geopolitical and cultural dimensions".⁴⁹¹ Hence, his approach is to describe first the geopolitical arena around the time of his writing, detailing the general occasions of some South Asian countries where a large number of ethnic Chinese and their descendants resided as citizens of the countries, as well as the *huaqiao* 華僑 (literally Chinese sojourners) in the West. His analysis is more congruent with an account of the ups and downs, wellbeing and suffering of such Chinese due to their own sense of being Chinese, or rather their being perceived as Chinese, when faced with political and/or economic factors, and is thus considered extrinsic to the pursuit of this thesis, which is more concerned with a reader's cognitive response to a Chinese text. This does not purport to exclude all extrinsic considerations; rather, all such considerations are assumed to have been manifested or represented cognitively in our mind, and in turn manifested or represented in our interpretation of a text.⁴⁹² Besides, Tu's recount of the then prevalent emigration of financially secure Malaysian,

Shi uses "Chinese-ness" instead of "Chineseness" which is adopted in this thesis.

⁴⁸⁸ Anbin Shi 2003b, 21.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Tu Wei-ming 1994b. On p. 1, Tu states that "[t]he meaning of being Chinese is intertwined with China as a geopolitical concept and Chinese culture as a lived reality". This echoes his saying of the book as trying to explore the changing meaning of being Chinese, on p. vi of the "Preface", as well as the book title, of Tu Wei-ming 1994a.

⁴⁹¹ Tu Wei-ming 1994b, 2.

⁴⁹² This is touched on in Section 2.3.A on linguistics and will be further explained in Chapter 3.

Indonesian, Filipino, and Vietnamese Chinese from their adopted homelands of several generations to escape from anti-Chinese discrimination, and of their, as he suggests, escaping from pressure to assimilate in order to preserve a measure of Chineseness for their descendants, is reminiscent of the Chinese saying *li shi er qiu zhu ye* 禮失而求諸野 (lost rites may be found in surrounding areas),⁴⁹³ especially when he then remarks that there is the perplexing irony of “their not returning to their ancestral homeland but moving farther away from China with the explicit intention of preserving their cultural identity”.⁴⁹⁴ Such deliberations, contrary to his assertion of the “fluidity” nature of Chineseness,⁴⁹⁵ contribute to a concept of Chineseness that is fixated with reference to the tradition. The pursuit of this thesis, therefore, requires a definition of Chineseness that is different from Tu’s.

Rey Chow’s discussion on Chineseness demonstrates how she feels negatively about involving the concept in literary studies.⁴⁹⁶ Basically, Chow’s “Chineseness” is an ethnicity concept which she tries to do without for fear of its use as a framework for (mis)understanding literature,⁴⁹⁷ while “Chineseness” in this thesis is more of a culture concept that is thought to contribute to understanding of literature. As this thesis is interested in analysis of poems composed in Chinese, and hence the language problem rather than the ethnicity problem, Chow’s Chineseness is considered to be of very limited use to this thesis.

In this regard, Michelle Yeh’s equalisation of “Chineseness” to “cultural identity”

⁴⁹³ This is attributed by *Han Shu* 漢書 to Confucius. See the chapter on “Zhuzi nue” 諸子略 (A Summary on Masters), in Chen Guoxing 1983, 99-165, and here 165.

⁴⁹⁴ Tu Wei-ming 1994b, 24.

⁴⁹⁵ Tu suggests that “[w]hile fully acknowledging that Chineseness is always intertwined with and often inseparable from race, land, language, and faith, we are critically aware of and deeply intrigued by its fluidity”. See Tu Wei-ming 1994a, Preface, vi.

⁴⁹⁶ Rey Chow 2000b.

⁴⁹⁷ Chow’s argument is somewhat weakened by her rather biased opinion on Chineseness, which is manifested by her actually calling it “a recurrent symptom, the habitually adamant insistence on *Chineseness* [italics original] as the distinguishing trait in what otherwise pursuit to be mobile, international practices” (2000b, 2). In this regard, a more “neutral” position is held by Ien Ang, who suggests that “[c]onceiving Chineseness as a discursive construct entails a disruption of the ontological stability and certainty of Chinese identity; it does not, however, negate its operative as a cultural principle in the social constitution of identities *as* [italics original] Chinese. In other words, the point is not to dispute the fact that Chineseness exists [...], but to investigate how this category operates in practice, in different [...] contexts” (1998, 227).

[in the context of the history of modern Chinese poetry] is more relevant to our discussion, though she is obviously against “defining and judging Chinese literature by Chineseness”.⁴⁹⁸ Yeh’s opposition to the notion of Chineseness in Chinese literature is, according to this thesis, theoretically untenable. It suffices here to point out that, as far as the poem is composed in Chinese (characters), Chineseness is already undeniably absorbed into the poem. It is of no use whatsoever to deny this inherent Chineseness, or its significance, or its necessity, except when the message could be separated from its carrier, or when the carrier could be replaced by a universal carrier void of any cultural colouring. Yeh’s view may be the result of her seeing the advocates of Chineseness as advancing it as *the* source of literariness (or *shiyi*, its quasi-equivalent in poetry), without realising the fact that Chineseness can be *a* source of literariness, but only subject to proper deployment of relevance in the work.

Another less relevant, more geographically-centred notion of Chineseness is suggested by Gregory B. Lee, who considers it as the Chinese identity “framed by a national sense of Chinese space, a geographically specific China”,⁴⁹⁹ but his focus is on the understanding of the multiple ways of seeing and being Chinese [by/in a foreign community].⁵⁰⁰

Besides, “Chineseness” in this thesis should also differ from “Chineseness” as conceived by the renowned historian Wang Gungwu, which is primarily a civilisation concept. Wang tries to discuss an awareness of being Chinese or seeing oneself as Chinese in terms of civilisation, including “ideas, values and institutions that emerged and developed largely within China”, which is compared to “a complex organism that has to be understood as a whole”, while at the same time suggesting that Chineseness is “living and changeable”.⁵⁰¹ Civilisation defined as such is considered to be too much a macro concept when used in poetry analysis, which this thesis contends to be involving mainly language as well as its conditioning culture.

⁴⁹⁸ See Michelle Yeh 2008, 11, where Yeh also remarks that “[t]o reify Chineseness is to put the cart before the horse”. Apparently, she opposes to her so-called “a priori notion of Chineseness”, but in fact in discussing Chineseness we need not accord it with such status, and the Chineseness proposed in this thesis, which is supposed to be a collective noun representing its forever-changing referents/constituents, can never be assigned with such *a priori* status.

⁴⁹⁹ Gregory B. Lee 2003, “Preface”, p. 1 and chap. 1, p. 12.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., back cover.

⁵⁰¹ Wang Gungwu 1991, 2.

The “Chineseness” referred to throughout our analysis of poems in this thesis, therefore, is to be differentiated from the concepts of Chineseness as used by the scholars stated above.

2.3.E.5 Summary

A review of recent relevant scholarly efforts has found no close model for reference. For instance, Adrian Pilkington’s account on poetic effect, apparently a similar concept of *shiyi*, focuses attention on only “small-scale poetic effects”, and his separation of literariness from literature is not meant to incorporate the tradition into a literary study. Markus Tendahl’s hybrid theory of metaphor attempts to merge relevance theory and cognitive linguistics into an organic whole fit for an in-depth analysis of metaphor, but his attention is overly paid to the innermost cognitive mechanism through which the processing of metaphor is conducted, and thus his efforts fall short of the expectation of producing a proportionally informative account of the literary effect actually perceived on the part of the hearer (though understandably as that is not his aim). Michel Hockx’s study offers a good example of literary study that could have been more useful reference, but it is based only on a limited and restricted readership as the focus of his model of “reader’s response”, rather than on our preferred notion of **general reader**. As for **Chineseness**, the treatments by the scholars introduced thus far, including a culture concept (Tu Wei-ming), an ethnicity concept (Rey Chow), *the* source of literariness (Michelle Yeh), a more geographically-centred notion (Gregory B. Lee) and a civilisation concept (Wang Gungwu), are not considered appropriate for the pursuit of this thesis, which places Chineseness as a cultural-literary concept as suggested in the hypothesis.

2.3.F PARAMATERS FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH:

After deliberations on theories and/or concepts in the literature in earlier sections along with key terms in the hypothesis, a number of parameters for revising and enriching the hypothesis based on *shiyi* are suggested below for further conceptualisation in the next chapter. The paramenters are supposed to link up and relate the key terms (including *shiyi*) and their related concepts as identified in both the Eastern and Western traditions, so that the key terms can later be properly defined having taken into account relevant deliberations in the traditions, as well as our deliberations on such deliberations. It is in this way that concepts from different approaches can be brought together to help illuminate the most important concept in

this thesis, *shiyi*.

Section 2.2: unintelligibility

(1) With the criterion of *shiyi* established subsequent to the analysis of the authorship problematic, it is possible to determine whether a poem is unintelligible because it is profoundly difficult or obscure for a reader to derive *shiyi* from it (**Type B unintelligibility**: unintelligibility arising from insufficient efforts expended in interpretation of the poem), or simply because it is lacking in meaningfulness, supposedly a necessary condition for *shiyi* (**Type A unintelligibility**: unintelligibility arising from unmeaningfulness of the poem).

Section 2.3.A: language studies

(2) A poetic language should take precedence over the *baihua* in our analysis of poetry. Besides, attention should be drawn to the culture/literary tradition factor (re. Chaofen Sun), or our **Chineseness**, in this poetic language, which should also benefit from conciseness and preciseness. This effectively relates *shiyi* to Chineseness, as well as conciseness and preciseness, if the poetic language is to capture all the essences as mentioned.

Sub-section 2.3.B.1.1: Chinese traditional poetics

(3) Openness, or its related and similar concepts such as Dong Zhongshu's *shi wu da gu* as construed with a reader-centred orientation, can be dealt with by a reader-centred approach, which is already tackled by *shiyi* if a valuation approach based on intentionalism (re. Davies) is adopted.

(4) Suggestiveness, which can subsume⁵⁰² under it concepts such as Liu Xie's *yin*, Sikong Tu's *hanxu*, Yan Yu's *yan you jin er yi wu qiong* and Ye Xie's *yan zai ci er yi zai bi*,⁵⁰³ is more relevant to the creation of *shiyi*, and is also related to Chow Tse-Tsung's *wen yi zai dao* in terms of exposition of **truth**, which is considered the

⁵⁰² This doesn't mean to replace all subsumed concepts by the subsuming concept, but to select the most representative one as the subsuming one on the basis of its applicability for use in theorisation of our proposed theory.

⁵⁰³ Of these concepts, Liu's *yin*, Sikong's *hanxu* and Ye's *yan zai ci er yi zai bi* are quite similar to one another, while Yan's *yan you jin er yi wu qiong* pushes the boundary further by suggesting the exceptional function of language of conveying meaning in an unconstrained or unrestrained manner.

focus of Sikong Tu's "poetics of transcendence" and Ye Xie's sayable/unsayable and explicable/inexplicable interplay.

(5) Echoing conciseness and preciseness arrived at in the language studies surveyed earlier, **economy**, as promoted by Yan Yu's *yan you jin er yi wu qiong* and supported by Chow Tse-Tsung's *wen yi zai dao*, is generally considered a guiding principle for differentiating the good poetry from the bad, which can be included in our conceptualisation of *shiyi*.

(6) **General reader**, as suggested by but preferable to Liu Xie's *zhiyin*, is in a way effectively narrowing or qualifying the openness concept through applying on the reader some conditions (e.g. literary knowledge) which are known to and shared by the author, and can thus be used as the basis of the **macro-context** posited in this thesis.

(7) **World**, as expounded by Wang Fuzhi's *qingjing jiaorong*, is also related to *shiyi* in terms of how it can be created.

Sub-section 2.3.B.1.2: modern development of Chinese poetics

(8) Wang Li's versification study may lend a vague support to its underlying concept of **familiarity** to that of form and **prosodic devices**.

(9) Zhu Guangqian's **world** and James Liu's **world** can be regarded as development in a similar direction, with the former emphasising the *buji buli* between the poem's world and the real world, seemingly suggesting the function of a poem in extending the knowledge boundary of the existing knowledge base, while the latter stressing the blending of a past experience with the present experience of writing and reading, or the unfamiliar with the familiar. Both of these worlds, however, are not clearly defined, and have to be subsumed under one that is well illuminated by concepts such as **Micro/micro-context** and **Macro/macro-context**.

(10) Insofar as the blending of the familiar with the unfamiliar is concerned, Liu's **world** also supports the notion of **familiarity**, and his *jing*, which can include the actual scene as well as the imaginary scene, can readily be replaced by the poetic world/context based on the **Micro-context** (supposedly a cognitive concept referring to what is in the mind) and the **micro-context** (an individualised cultural-literary knowledge base).

(11) Wai-lim Yip's "Chinese Theory of Reading" provides a more balanced approach to the interpretation problem through integrating the reading experience of a reader and an author, as well as pinpointing a poem's openness to various different voices, and can thus be dealt with by *shiyi*.

(12) The implication of Yip's model is the resulting reinforcement of a literary tradition or canon by both authors and readers, whose reading experience is integrated and regurgitated into the writing process through reader expectations, and hence its relevance to **familiarity**, which as a quality or an attribute can contribute to reduced unmeaningfulness (**Type A unintelligibility**).

(13) Owen's lore and *zhiyin* (a variety or development of Liu Xie's *zhiyin*) can be compared to **Chineseness** and subsumable under the **general reader**, just that our new concepts are more encompassing as they include the culture factor in addition to that of the literary tradition.

(14) Pauline Yu establishes an assumed association by the Chinese reader between the imagery in a poem (and what a reader may draw from it) and the original message entrusted by the poet to the words therein, which lends support to the tradition of *wen yi zai dao* as elaborated by Chow Tse-Tsung, which in turn entails reinforcement of the author-reader interaction and relationship as built up in Wai-lim Yip's model, as well as in Owen's concept of *zhiyin*, and by extension our **general reader**.

(15) Yu's imagery model is commensurate with, and may as well support, Chow Tse-Tsung's so-called Confucianist approach of viewing literature as having the potential for effective exposition of the *Dao*, thus also effectively relating *Dao*, or **truth**, to *shiyi*.

(16) Gu's suggestiveness, which also captures the concept of openness, represents modern efforts to recover the obscure link between Dong Zhongshu's *shi wu da gu*, Sikong Tu's *hanxu* (and by extension, Liu Xie's *yin*, Yan Yu's *yan you jin er yi wu qiong* and Ye Xie's *yan zai ci er yi zai bi*) and exposition of the *Dao* (and thus **truth**, and *shiyi*) as expounded by Chow Tse-Tsung in his examination of the so-called Confucianist approach of viewing literature (which in turn is related to Sikong Tu's "poetics of transcendence" and Ye Xie's sayable/unsayable and explicable/inexplicable interplay).

(17) In terms of James Liu's double exploration of worlds and languages, the exploration of **worlds** can be compared to extension of the knowledge boundary for **truth**-seeking, and the exploration of language can be compared to creation of *shiyi*. This double exploration, of course, dictates the inseparability of **truth** and *shiyi*.

Sub-section 2.3.B.2: western poetics

(18) Poe's "The Poetic Principle" is another way of suggesting the **economy** concept in Chinese poetics.

(19) Shklovsky's "defamiliarisation" is in particular relevant to the working of the concept of **familiarity** in poetry.

(20) Riffaterre's two-level system provides some insights as to how technically the underlying meaning in a text can be recovered in a two-level system, and hopefully by extension, a two-**world** model, and his "saying one thing and meaning another" also reminds one of its similarity to Ye Xie's *yan zai ci er yi zai bi*, and hence its relevance to the creation of *shiyi* and Chow Tse-Tsung's elaborated *wen yi zai dao* as far as exposition of **truth** is concerned.

(21) Hyland's Plato lends support to the difficulty in defining an abstract concept, such as *shiyi*, and provides an entry point to recognising the opposition between the adequacy of words in expressing the real truths and the simplicity of expression if such truths are indeed expressed in words, which is relevant to the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** posited in this thesis.

(22) Miall and Kuiken's model on literariness has provided a most insightful reference model as to how *shiyi* can be conceptualised. Their focus on the reading experience of the reader in terms of transformation of feelings/concepts is highly relevant to theorisation of the concept of *shiyi*. Besides offering insights as regards conceptualisation of the **general reader**, their identification of the reinterpreative effort that follows defamiliarisation as the source of individual differences in response to literary texts also calls for reworking or even replacement of defamiliarisation by or through our **familiarity** (as well as its accompanying concept (un)familiarisation). In addition, their idea of thematising attempts of the reader to articulate the phenomena within the text sheds light on the **contextualisation mechanism** in which this thesis is interested, and the transformation on the reader they describe as the result of such attempts also advises on the working of *shiyi* as outcome of poetry

reading.

Section 2.3.C: linguistic theories

(23) Relevance theory is found relevant to the pursuit of this thesis considering that valuation by means of *shiyi* is about selecting the relevant elements from the context that can contribute to maximisation of *shiyi*. Besides, themes are found to be necessary for supporting this maximisation of *shiyi*.

(24) The CG as posited in Text World Theory is poised to lend a theoretical basis for conceptualisation and theorisation of the relationship between the **Macro/macro-context** and the **Micro/micro-context** as adopted in this thesis, and the description of “text world” may provide a rough definition to a poetic world/context (formed with respect to a particular poem being read) based on the **Micro/micro-context**.

(25) The implications of the problem of vagueness can be analysed under consideration of the distinction between ordinary language and poetic language and of the practical difficulties of formulating a proposed theory of *shiyi*.

Section 2.3.D: hermeneutics

(26) Intentionalism, an approach focusing on recovering the author’s intention with a view to locating the correct meaning, is practised in the Chinese literary hermeneutic tradition. Such an approach, however, can be absorbed and dealt with satisfactorily by *shiyi*.

(27) It is possible to take Zhu Xi’s tension between his will to know and uncertainty to answer into consideration, so as to posit the **truth** vs. **truthfulness** relationship that can be used to highlight the uniqueness of human sciences.

(28) Gadamer’s prejudices can be conceptualised together with the proposed pair of concept of **Macro/macro-context** and **Micro/micro-context**, while his fusion of horizons is relevant to James Liu’s **world**, as well as the understanding process characterised by the concept of **(un)familiarity**.

(29) Though overstated, Gadamer’s assertion that hermeneutic understanding can reveal and guarantee truths that the scientific method cannot rightly suggests the

likelihood of continuous improvement on **truthfulness** through the never-ending negotiations of hermeneutics.

(30) Ricoeur's deliberations on achieving self-understanding by means of understanding others through hermeneutics is of particular relevance to this thesis regarding the concept of **(un)familiarity**, as well as the **aim/value** of reading literature/poetry, and his "**world of the text**" may be adapted to support Liu's **world** with a hermeneutic basis, so as to form a poetic world/context based on the **Micro/micro-context**.

(31) Through his study of metaphor, Ricoeur suggests how a poetic discourse can supplement descriptive language, and this is related to how *shiyi* can be derived through poetic language.

(32) The three stages of Ricoeur's "hermeneutical circle" may well be considered/adapted for operational procedures for poetry analysis.

(33) Jauss's reception theory is methodologically relevant to this thesis as it effectively links hermeneutics to literary study through incorporating a historical dimension into interpretation.

(34) Julia Ching's essay has a number of implications, including an openness to interpretations of the Chinese classics, and hence its relevance to **micro-context** and **macro-context**, the established **value** of classical texts (as compared to yet-to-establish value of modern poems) as reflecting on how a hermeneutic study is conducted, and the attentiveness of the Chinese tradition to the spiritual message that transcends the text and is immanent in it, which agrees with the suggestion that language is both **limited** and **unlimited** in its expression. The Chinese tradition, in turn, can be discussed in terms of **familiarity**, **Chineseness** and **micro/macro-context**.

(35) Kuang Yu Chen's essay has pointed out a possible trade-off between freedom of interpretation and attention given to the **authorship** problem of a classical text, the relationship between the practical use that *Shijing* has been put to and the **value** attached to, and hence the **truth** conveyed in, literature by the tradition, and the practical nature of hermeneutics in the Chinese tradition.

(36) Jianhua Chen's essay has shed light on the aim of hermeneutics as getting closer

to the ultimate **truth**, which necessitates a proposed replacement in the human sciences of the notion of (absolute) **truth** by that of (a sense of) **truthfulness** as the outcome of pursuit.

(37) Gu's essay (on literary openness) suggests that openness was possibly the unexpected outcome of conflicts between canonical critical precepts and critical practice, from which a link can be derived between openness and a canon, and by extension, **micro-context** and **macro-context**; and intentionalism had long been prevalent in the Chinese hermeneutic tradition to suggest the possibility of obtaining the **truth** of meaning through identification of authorial intention, which has implications on *shiyi*.

Sub-section 2.3.E: recent relevant scholarly efforts

(38) Pilkington's account on poetic effect, which focuses attention on "small-scale poetic effects", is unsatisfactory for this thesis, and his separation of literariness from literature fails to incorporate the tradition into a literary study. Hence, a "large-scale" approach to *shiyi* is required.

(39) Tendahl's hybrid theory of metaphor is more concerned with the innermost cognitive mechanism through which the processing of metaphor is conducted rather than providing a proportionally informative account of the literary effect actually perceived on the part of the hearer. Hence, an approach focusing on *shiyi* is required.

(40) Hockx's study offers a good example of literary study that could have been more useful reference, but it is based only on a limited and restricted readership as the focus of his model of "reader's response". Hence, a new concept of **general reader** is required.

(41) Treatments of Chineseness by the scholars introduced thus far, including a culture concept (Tu Wei-ming), an ethnicity concept (Rey Chow), *the* source of literariness (Michelle Yeh), a more geographically-centred notion (Gregory B. Lee) and a civilisation concept (Wang Gungwu), are not considered appropriate for the pursuit of this thesis, which instead places **Chineseness** as a cultural-literary concept.

2.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS:

In the foregoing, it is shown that the above *old* concepts extracted from various theories and/or approaches examined in this chapter can be subsumed wholly (say a few versions of suggestiveness or its related concepts) or partly (say a few versions of Chineseness) under a few *new* concepts proposed for use in this thesis. With full or partial incorporation of the old concepts into the new ones underlying the proposed theory of *shiyi* through such subsuming according to the above parameters, as will be done in the next chapter, the proposed theory is posed to be heading farther into the right direction as far as poetry analysis is concerned.

CHAPTER 3: PROPOSED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR INVESTIGATION OF *SHIYI*

3.1 INTRODUCTION:

Subsequent to the literature review in Chapter 2 in respect of philosophical/linguistic/literary theories or approaches relevant to the unintelligibility problem under investigation in this thesis, the focus of this chapter is integration of the hypothesis presented in Chapter 1 with the identified theories and/or approaches of poetics, pragmatics and hermeneutics with a view to formulating a revised hypothesis appropriate for the purposes of this thesis.

In Chapter 2, 41 parameters have been presented as findings of the literature review, and they will be used to shape the deliberations in the following sections for constructing an operational framework for use in Chapter 4.

3.2 CONCEPTUAL DELIBERATIONS:

In the following, deliberations on constructing a theoretical framework is given based on parameters (1) to (41) (hereinafter referred to as **P1**, **P2**, etc.) listed out in Chapter 2, as well as the tentative arguments (hereinafter referred to as **A1** to **A6**) posited in Chapter 1 as the departure point of conceptualisation.

3.2.1 Parameters in Perspectives

In order to facilitate the application of the parameters, it is more convenient to arrange them by putting them in proper perspectives. Since the hypothesis comprising the proposed theory of *shiyi* has been presented in arguments and conceptualised around some key terms, it is suggested to group the parameters along with their respective arguments and key terms accordingly as in the table in **Appendix A**, so that parameters related to a specific argument and a key term can be considered together. In the remarks column of the table, notes are given with particular reference to how the key terms, as well as those concepts identified in Chapter 2, are (inter-)related,⁵⁰⁴ e.g. how some of the concepts can contribute to

⁵⁰⁴ Any inter-relatedness between key terms in different arguments should not be subject to criticism of circularity, as it is simply impossible to reduce any arguments to merely the most basic yet highly

enriching and/or sharpening the content of, and hence be subsumed under, the key terms.

Please turn to **Appendix A** for the presentation of findings.

From **Appendix A**, it can be noted that, apart from P32, P33 and part of P34, which are more related to poetry analysis and foundation of the proposed theory rather than to particular arguments and/or key terms, the remainder of the parameters all contribute to sharpening and deepening our understanding on how the key terms can be properly defined so as to better construct the arguments and the hypothesis at large. In the following section, with the input from **Appendix A**, definitions, if applicable, will be worked out for the key terms having due regard to the parameters concerned.

3.2.2 Definitions of Key Terms

As a progressive step towards working out the revised definitions of the key terms, insights from the parameters as obtained in **Appendix A** are aligned vertically beside the key terms in the table in **Appendix B** so as to be considered collectively to generate the revised definitions that can incorporate the benefits of their related concepts.

Please turn to **Appendix B** for the presentation of findings.

Among the revised definitions generated in **Appendix B**, it should be noted that the revised definition of *shiyi* is comparatively brief given insights from all related parameters. The reason for this is that it is simply impossible to work out an all-inclusive definition for the abstract *shiyi* at this stage. As such, except for those most decisive to definition-formation, all other insights have to be reflected in the arguments instead to deepen our understanding of the relevant concept(s).⁵⁰⁵ Besides, since subtlety is closely related to *shiyi*, those insights related to *shiyi* can be regarded as also related to subtlety, and vice versa. In the next section, the findings

explanatory key terms, if any, which are themselves self-evident and independent of other explanatory terms. Key terms are used for their accurate description of some phenomena, states of affair, situations, etc., which may have overlapping in usage with other key terms as a matter of fact. See also n.114 for reference.

⁵⁰⁵ This is exactly why in the hypothesis, the proposed theory of *shiyi* is supported by a number of arguments.

in the Definition/Remarks column in **Appendix B** will be fed back into, and hence strengthen, the arguments.

3.2.3 The Six Arguments Revisited

With findings of our deliberations presented in **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**, the six arguments will now be revisited in detail, so as to further refine the arguments, as well as the proposed theory of *shiyi* they are counted to support. It should be noted, however, that it is only after the arguments are tested through poetry analysis in the next chapter will the definitions of the key terms, as well as their accompanying arguments, be finalised.

As suggested in Chapter 1, apart from the proposed theory of *shiyi*, the proposed framework of the hypothesis consists of six arguments (**A1** to **A6**), whose details are now revised and refined below (as **RA1** to **RA4** accordingly, with the deletion of **A3** and **A6**) in light of the deliberations in the appendices:

A1: The Common Cultural-literary Macro-context Argument

In view of the remarks/definitions in **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**, **A1**⁵⁰⁶ can now be revised as **RA1 (The Common Cultural-literary Macro-context Argument)**:

It is argued that the classical Chinese poetry tradition has given rise to a common “cultural-literary macro-context” (which is part of a common Macro-context defined as a knowledge base comprising all kinds of available knowledge) from which an individual reader may, consciously or not, extract those relevant and related constituents and assimilate them into a cognitive

⁵⁰⁶ **A1** reads: It is argued that as far as cultural-literary elements are concerned, the classical Chinese poetry tradition has given rise to a common “cultural-literary **macro-context**” (which is part of a common Macro-context defined as a knowledge base comprising all kinds of available knowledge) from which an individual reader may, consciously or not, extract those relevant and related constituents and assimilate them into a cognitive “cultural-literary **micro-context**” (which is part of the individual reader’s cognitive Micro-context, defined as a cognitive state of the individual, comprising all kinds of knowledge available to him) well before the commencement of reading of a classical poem new to the individual reader for its subsequent, effective interpretation through a “double-contextualisation” mechanism (comprising **internal contextualisation** and **external contextualisation**).

“cultural-literary micro-context”⁵⁰⁷ (which is part of the individual reader’s cognitive Micro-context, defined as a cognitive state of an individual, comprising all kinds of knowledge available to him) well before the commencement of reading of a classical poem new to the individual reader for its subsequent, effective interpretation through a “double-contextualisation” mechanism (comprising internal contextualisation and external contextualisation) geared to “poetic context” construction and thematisation.

Since **macro-context** is now well defined, “as far as cultural-literary elements are concerned,” in the original argument can be deleted. Besides, as contextualisation is considered to be composed of two levels of mechanism, the underlined expression “geared to ‘poetic context’ construction and thematisation” is now added to the revised argument. This revised argument is formulated from a reader’s perspective, which, as will be seen, is different from, and complementary to, **RA2**. It is suggested that the classical Chinese poetry tradition has contributed cultural-literary constituents⁵⁰⁸ to a common “**Macro-context**”, from which a reader may manage to extract those relevant constituents and assimilate them into his existing “**Micro-context**” for interpretation of classical poetry⁵⁰⁹ through a double-contextualisation mechanism (comprising, or rather as a combination of, internal and external contextualisation). Specifically, it can be argued that the classical Chinese poetry tradition has given rise to a common “cultural-literary macro-context”⁵¹⁰ (which is part of the common **Macro-context**) from which,

⁵⁰⁷ There should arguably be an overlapping area between the individual reader’s cultural-literary micro-context and the common cultural-literary macro-context. But obviously, the individual’s micro-context is most likely lying within the common macro-context, so for all practical purposes the overlapping area can be considered to coincide with the individual’s micro-context.

⁵⁰⁸ These “cultural-literary constituents” should comprise, *inter alia*, traditional prosody and what Jonathan Culler refers to as “conventions”, i.e. conventions of “significance”, “metaphorical coherence”, “poetic tradition” and “thematic unity”. See Culler 2007, 134.

⁵⁰⁹ Michelle Yeh touches on similar interpretation issues in Yeh 1991 (esp. chap. 1, 5-28), but does not go so far as to come up with any comprehensive theoretical framework for guiding further in-depth research. In comparison, Culler (2007, 141) considers that it is through one’s “literary competence”, which is learned from his literary education, that a person is able to become a “perceptive and competent reader”.

⁵¹⁰ In Stephen Owen’s words, this may be called a “repertoire of available choices”, a “poetic past” which in the Late Tang was beginning to assume the form it would possess in China for the next

primarily through a traditional schooling based on the Chinese classics,⁵¹¹ a reader may manage to extract those relevant constituents and assimilate them into a “cultural-literary micro-context” (which is part of his *Micro-context*) through an external contextualisation mechanism - well before the commencement of reading of a classical poem new to him - for subsequent, effective interpretation (“effective” in terms of the cognitive effects⁵¹² achieved and the cognitive/processing efforts utilised, as according to relevance theory⁵¹³) through an internal contextualisation mechanism.⁵¹⁴

Using a self-invented analogy, the *Macro-context* can be compared to a **library**,

millennium, including “styles, genres, and the voices of past poets” (2006, 16). Of course, this repertoire would over time incorporate into itself more such styles, genres, and the voices of past poets.

⁵¹¹ JeeLoo Liu, for instance, suggests that “[i]n Chinese intellectual history, the study of the classics is an integral part of education. The classics include *The Book of Changes (Yijing)*, *The Book of Odes (Shi-jing)*, *The Book of History (Shu-jing)*, *The Book of Rites (Li-ji)*, and *The Annals of Spring and Autumn (Chun-qiu)*” (2006, 10), but these classics represent only part of the “classical canon”. Besides, Culler’s idea of “literary education” (2007, 141) seems to echo or concur with the “traditional schooling based on the Chinese classics” suggested above, but his theory in general is not intended to cope with interpretation issues, and it has put too much emphasis on “literary *education*” and “conventions” so as to ignore the inclusion of active, voluntary participation in “traditional *studies*” and individual creation, as well as other possible factors conducive to effective interpretation.

⁵¹² Here, the “cognitive effects” achieved in reading a poem can be taken as representing the effects from truths (re. construction of poetic context) as well as the effects from truthfulness (re. derivation of *shiyi*).

⁵¹³ As Ruth Kempson rightly points out, “[t]his trade-off between cognitive effort and cognitive effect is at the heart of the concept of relevance itself” (2001, 407).

⁵¹⁴ In the thesis, a “*Macro/Micro-context*” refers to a common/an individual’s context encompassing all types of knowledge, information, concepts, etc, while a “*macro/micro-context*” refers to a common/an individual’s context encompassing only cultural-literary knowledge, information, concepts, etc. For a common “*Macro-context*”, it can further be suggested that if viewed from a wider perspective, this *Macro-context* for everyone should be the same “out there”, while if viewed from a narrower perspective, a Westerner and an Easterner, for instance, should have their respective different *Macro-contexts* to depend on for interpretation. Actually, it can be argued that it is all of a matter of the magnitude of extra processing efforts exerted to overcome the gap (if any) resulting from, say, the cultural divide between various *Macro-contexts*. If the gap is seen to require a lot of such efforts, two or more *Macro-contexts* are said to co-exist; if the efforts are not exceptionally high, a single *Macro-context* is said to exist. For a detailed account, including an analysis based on my “library analogy”, please refer to deliberation in the following two paragraphs in the main text.

in which all books are “out there” for reading,⁵¹⁵ with extra efforts required for the intake of extra knowledge by a reader to build up a stronger “repertoire” of his own, i.e. the *Micro*-context (and specifically and more accurately, the common overlapping area between the *Macro*-context and his *Micro*-context).

For example, in Li Shangyin’s famous “Le you yuan” 樂遊原 (Leyou Height, undated,⁵¹⁶ referred to **C1**, as in **Appendix C**),⁵¹⁷ it should be noted that *xiyang* 夕陽 (the setting sun) in line 3 (*Xiyang wuxian hao* 夕陽無限好 [The setting sun has infinite beauty]) is a “natural symbol of transience frequently used in traditional Chinese poetry”, which “understandably lends itself to the expression of sadness, nostalgia, or similar emotions”.⁵¹⁸ Another symbol can be 登 *deng* (ascending) in line 2, since “ascending the heights” is a “recurrent motif for expressing a contemplative mood or lament that has appeared in traditional Chinese poetry”.⁵¹⁹ Such images, as well as many found in classical poetry, can be regarded as constituents in the cultural-literary macro-context, itself also part of the common Macro-context. As such, a reader will benefit a lot, in terms of his understanding of Li’s poem, from his familiarity to such symbols developed before his reading of the poem through internal contextualisation. In case the reader is not that familiar with

⁵¹⁵ This library of books is definitely not a static concept, as books are continually moved in and out of the library. This agrees with Rescher’s idea that “while the cognitive range of finite beings is indeed limited, it is also boundless. For it is not limited in a way that blocks the prospect of cognitive access to ever new and continually different facts, thereby affording an ever ampler and ever more accurate account of reality” (2009, 51).

⁵¹⁶ According to Liu and Yu 2004, 5:2170, it is remarked in Cheng Mengxing’s 程夢星 *Chong ding Li Yishan shiji jianzhu* 重訂李義山詩集箋注 [Revised notes and commentaries on Li Yishan’s poetry] that the poem must have been written around the 4th or 5th year of Huichang (“此詩當作於會昌四、五年間 [i.e. 844-845]” in original). N.B.: In this section, classical poems are as appropriate selected for discussion along with new poems, in order to illustrate the arguments, as well as to demonstrate the applicability of the hypothesis to both sub-genres of Chinese poetry.

⁵¹⁷ See James Liu’s translation, which is adapted in the thesis, in **Appendix C**. N.B.: In Liu’s original translation, the poem ends with an exclamation mark, and the title of the poem is rendered as “Lo-yu Heights”. See James Liu 1969, 160.

⁵¹⁸ Yeh 1991, 7-8.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., 8. Such symbols can be considered the use of allusions, though not exactly allusions to the Confucian classics. In this regard, it is noted that James Liu’s following remark concerning “allusions to Confucian classics” also applies to the symbols used in Li’s poem: “allusions to Confucian classics in Chinese poetry, which would have been readily understood by all literate Chinese in the old days, may present difficulties to a contemporary Chinese reader” (1962, 131).

the symbols, doing some research in the library for “books out there”, he can still improve his understanding of the poem through external contextualisation. According to the above discussion, it seems the RA1 is supported, which is significant to the hypothesis as this first argument in turn supports the Subtlety-unintelligibility Continuum Argument.

A2: The Subtlety-unintelligibility Continuum Argument

In view of the findings in **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**, **A2**⁵²⁰ can now be revised as **RA2 (The Subtlety-unintelligibility Continuum Argument)**:

It is argued that a writer of classical poetry would be, in most cases, inclined to compose in a way taking full advantage of all possible nuances through manoeuvring his perceived cultural-literary micro-context of the general reader, with a view to constructing a poetic context out of (un)familiarity to the micro-context, thus hopefully through thematising attempts, contributing to shiyi whose likeliness of realisation is measured by subtlety in the subtlety-unintelligibility continuum, and that, in stark contrast, most writers of modern poetry have neglected or ignored the significance of (use of) the micro-context of the general reader so as to render their compositions verging more on the side of Type A/B unintelligibility. Accordingly, the subtlety-unintelligibility continuum is where all poems can be located with regard to their respective subtlety/unintelligibility.

This argument is made in order to further characterise the key terms, including subtlety, familiarity, *shiyi* and unintelligibility, by means of explicating two ways of composing. Different from RA1, this argument is formulated from the perspective of a poet, who is supposed to compose having no individual reader, but rather the

⁵²⁰ **A2** reads: It is argued that a writer of classical poetry would be, in most cases, inclined to compose in a way taking full advantage of all possible nuances through manoeuvring the cultural-literary macro-context, with a view to creating a sense of “**subtlety**” out of **familiarity**, thus contributing to *shiyi*. In stark contrast, most writers of modern poetry have neglected or ignored the significance of (use of) the macro-context so as to render their compositions verging more on the side of Type A/B **unintelligibility**. Accordingly, a subtlety-unintelligibility continuum can be drawn for all poems where a particular poem can be located nearer to either end with regard to its perceived subtlety/unintelligibility as the case may be.

general reader, in mind,⁵²¹ which can be regarded as seeing his readership collectively. Subject to elaboration that is forthcoming in this chapter and confirmation by analysis of poetry in Chapter 4, it is suggested that the writer of classical poetry would be, in most cases, inclined to compose in a way taking full advantage of all possible nuances through manoeuvring the micro-context of the general reader (e.g. “playing the game” within a fixed number of words in compliance with the accepted prosody⁵²² and adapting familiar images from the poetic tradition⁵²³), with a view to creating a poetic context out of (un)familiarity to that micro-context⁵²⁴ (through the use of meaningful units with (un)familiarising effect)⁵²⁵ (i.e. **the first-level contextualisation**), thus hopefully through thematising attempts, contributing to *shiyi* (i.e. **the second-level contextualisation**) whose likeliness of realisation is measured by subtlety in the subtlety-unintelligibility continuum. Differentiation is made in particular between Type A unintelligibility and Type B unintelligibility, so that Type A unintelligibility refers to unmeaningfulness or failure in constructing a poetic context through supplying truths by means of meaningful units with (un)familiarising effect,⁵²⁶ and Type B unintelligibility refers to failure in realising *shiyi* through thematising attempts. As such, the subtlety-unintelligibility continuum is where a poem is positioned according to the subtlety it is perceived to attain by the reader.

⁵²¹ Of course this need not be the case as when the poet tries to address his work to a limited number of individual readers.

⁵²² Exercise of poetic licence, which represents one way of such manoeuvring, may be considered “not playing by the rules of the game”.

⁵²³ Specifically, James Liu in his analysis of the use of imagery has commented: “If the poet uses images which have similar associations to build up a coherent picture, or if he uses a conventional image but gives it a twist or a fresh significance in a new context, or if he further develops such an image or modifies it to suit his present purpose, then it matters little whether the imagery is original or not.” (1962, 115.) This very way of image handling described by Liu represents one of the methods by which a poet can create “subtlety” out of “familiarity”.

⁵²⁴ This is/was possible probably also due to what Idema and Haft refer to as “the uniformity of Chinese literature”, which was the result of the fact that “[t]raditional Chinese writers nearly always addressed themselves to their social and intellectual peers” (1997, 31). Such social and intellectual peers, of course, can be regarded as examples of the general reader then.

⁵²⁵ Cf. Yeh 1991, 2, where Michelle Yeh suggests in a general way that traditional poets working within the classical genre actually worked within the parameters of the classical canon even though the paradigm changed from time to time.

⁵²⁶ This will be explained in a later section.

It is suggested that meaningfulness (based on truths of the poetic context⁵²⁷ and derived through first-level contextualisation attempts) is the first-level cognitive effect derived from reading poetry, which may not lead to subtlety, the intermediary that in turn is, though not necessarily, conducive to *shiyi* (based on truthfulness of the real world we are all inhabiting and derived through second-level contextualisation attempts, i.e. thematising attempts⁵²⁸), or the second-level cognitive effect. The more subtle the poem is, the more likely it is to produce *shiyi*, subject to successful thematising attempts. Subtlety is thus related to suggestiveness, which is supposed to mean the existence of relevance between meaningful units and something extra and in addition to what is literally said in the poem. Relevance, in turn, is regarded as referring to maximisation of *shiyi* in poetry appreciation. In other words, a poem can be subtle yet not relevant to maximisation of *shiyi*.

A case in point is the fisherman image in Liu Zongyuan's 柳宗元 (773-819) "Jiang xue" 江雪 (River snow, undated,⁵²⁹ referred to as **C2** in **Appendix C**),⁵³⁰ one of his masterpieces. The unique image of "the fisherman" as appearing in different poems of different dynasties⁵³¹ has highlighted the use of deployment of this symbol to enriching the content of the poem. A reader who is familiar with classical Chinese poetry will undoubtedly bring into his appreciation elements worthy of attention, including the encounters of the fisherman figure with various historical personalities, such as Qu Yuan, so as to be able to substantiate the poem with a lot of extra meanings.⁵³²

⁵²⁷ Such truths can be considered the rules of the game of construction of a poetic context, in which one has to believe so as to actually participate in the game.

⁵²⁸ These, understandably, refer to attempts to contextualise through some themes of existential concerns.

⁵²⁹ The poem was probably composed during Liu's demotion to Yongzhou 永州 in 805 A.D. which lasted for around a decade. See Baidu.com 2012b for the dating of the poem, and Baidu.com 2012a for an account of the political incident resulting in the demotion. Cf. Xiao and et al. 2004, 937, where the poem is dated roughly to the period of Liu's stay in Yongzhou subsequent to his demotion.

⁵³⁰ The translation is adapted from Stephen Owen (2006, 3). The fisherman, just *weng* 翁, literally "an old man", appears in line 3: 孤舟蓑笠翁 *guzhou suoli weng* [In a lone boat an old man in rain hat and raincoat].

⁵³¹ Ibid., 2-3.

⁵³² James Liu comments that "[i]n a society where most readers may be presumed to have a similar educational background, such as in ancient China [...], the poet can use allusions with greater confidence, in the same way as he may use conventional symbols" (1962, 132). This highlights the advantage of having a homogeneous knowledge to the interpretation of classical poetry.

On the other hand, when it comes to modern poetry, it is suggested that since there is no longer any recognised cultural-literary micro-context of the general reader for borrowing/reference during internal contextualisation, every reader has to construct in his individualised manner a poetic context which will be quite different, if not distinct from the poetic context based on the micro-context of the poet he is reading,⁵³³ making it difficult for efficient (re)generation of the maximised possible *shiyi*. Accordingly, a poem, whose poetic context is mainly based on a modern poet's specific micro-context (which may include prosody, if any in its strictest sense, of his invention), cannot be so readily identified with by many of its audience having varied and different micro-contexts at their disposal.⁵³⁴ Consequently, Type A unintelligibility, though mostly unintended,⁵³⁵ will result from, and can be explained in terms of, unfamiliarity.⁵³⁶ And this argument will be tested in the chapter of

⁵³³ As James Liu points out, "[i]n an age such as the present one, when no common body of knowledge and beliefs can be taken for granted among all readers, allusions tend to appear obscure, like private symbols" (ibid.). Allusions, however, only amount to part of the obscure problems arising out of the context as put forward in the thesis.

⁵³⁴ It can be said that those elements made use of in composing a modern poem may not have entered the cultural-literary macro-context and the cultural-literary micro-contexts of the individual readers (though the poem *per se* as a written text will definitely enter and become part of the Macro-context as at least a piece of information once it is published or made public), so that a reader has nowhere to turn to for assimilation of relevant elements into his cultural-literary micro-context except for relying on external contextualisation. It should be noted that as the reader assimilates elements into his micro-context, an overlapping area between this micro-context and the macro-context will concurrently be formed or rather enlarged. It follows that poems composed making use of elements falling within this **overlapping area** can be readily interpreted through internal contextualisation.

⁵³⁵ In addition to the author's original intent, the ability of the author to fully realise his intent is also in question. There can be cases in which the author simply fails to realise his very intent to convey a particular message via the work, e.g. when he fails to include sufficient, necessary "clues" which may supposedly lead the reader to derive the intended meaning of the text through a contextualisation mechanism. This, however, need not directly result in an inferior assessment of the artistic value of the work by the audience if *shiyi* is the adopted criterion of assessment.

⁵³⁶ T. M. McClellan (1999) has provided an excellent exposition of similar concepts defined by a continuum characterised by "familiarity" and "strangeness" in his article on Wen Yiduo's experimentation in metres for modern Chinese poetry. His research is essentially a formalistic study through close reading and penetrating analysis of Wen's *Sishui* (死水) poems, with a view to elaborating on Wen's artistic use and mastery of metres. This thesis, while in a way building on McClellan's findings, attempts to explore interpretation issues arising out of the contextualisation

poetry analysis.

A3: The Prosody Benefit Argument

In view of the findings in the two appendices concerned, **A3**⁵³⁷ can now be subsumed under **RA2 (The Subtlety-unintelligibility Continuum Argument)** stated above.

In fact, “contextualisation” means giving a context to the meaningful units concerned, including all relevant information in the micro-context during the initial internal contextualisation process. Thus, if prosodic devices are perceived as significant in poetry interpretation, the reader will definitely search for what is relevant in the mind in his contextualisation attempt. In practice, however, poems such as “Jing ye si” 靜夜思 (Meditating on a Silent Night, referred to as **C3** in **Appendix C**),⁵³⁸ one of Li Bai’s 李白 most famous poems, and Wen Yiduo’s 聞一多 “Shenme meng” 什麼夢 (What is This Dream?)⁵³⁹ may be readily understood by referring to the poems themselves. Such poems have in themselves made available necessary, and also sufficient, conditions for worthwhile interpretation by the reader at his first reading,⁵⁴⁰ so that they may be considered poems interpretable through internal contextualisation. This means the poems are meaningful as far as the construction of a poetic context is concerned.

Nonetheless, any truly in-depth appreciation may still call for additional processing efforts spent as input into a “depth dimension” in internal contextualisation

mechanism.

⁵³⁷ **A3** reads: It is argued that, given the supportive role of **prosodic devices** in the derivation of *shiyi*, the better equipped a modern, or classical, poet is with a full range of such devices, the better equipped he is to compose works with more *shiyi*.

⁵³⁸ According to its most popular version, the poem so famous for its concretisation of nostalgia reads like this: 床前明月光/疑是地上霜/舉頭望明月/低頭思故鄉. See The Hunan Publishing House Translation Division 2007, 241 for the poem in Chinese. It is noted that the earliest original version of this highly popular poem should instead read like this: 床前看月光/疑是地上霜/舉頭望山月/低頭思故鄉 [differences in wordings emphasised]. However, our analysis remains valid given these minor changes in wordings. See An 2000, 89-90 for the original version of Li’s poem.

⁵³⁹ For the original and translation of Wen Yiduo’s “What is This Dream?”, as well as a formalistic analysis of the poem, see McClellan 1999, 161-165.

⁵⁴⁰ For “worthwhile” interpretation, a text should be worthy of a reader’s efforts spent in exchange of sufficient information contained therein.

and/or into a “width dimension” in external contextualisation,⁵⁴¹ in order to digest further, say, the prosody, which will likely be inversely proportional to the reader’s knowledge of the prosody precisely adopted in each poem.⁵⁴² Understandably, the amount of additional processing efforts required for prosodic contextualisation along the “depth dimension” will be considerable in Wen’s case where his prosodic efforts can be regarded as pioneering. Needless to say, therefore, contextualisation in its wider sense as used in this thesis should include putting the poem in the “context of prosody” as well. It follows that Chinese traditional metres, as in Li’s poem, comprising fixed or rather inflexible forms,⁵⁴³ numbers of characters and/or lines, etc, could qualify as elements in a common cultural-literary macro-context for manoeuvring by a reader in(to) his micro-context, or may even be found as already existing in his micro-context. These particular elements, or better still “traditional devices”, which are expected to trigger a process of internal contextualisation (*without* the input of additional processing efforts along a “width dimension”, in the case of a reader familiar with such traditional devices) or external contextualisation (*with* the input of additional processing efforts along a “width dimension”, in the case of a reader unfamiliar with such devices) and instill in the reader a certain kind of familiarity bearing more or fewer clues to relevance to the micro/macro-context, amount to an ostensive stimulus⁵⁴⁴ necessary for effective communication.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴¹ “External contextualisation” as defined in this thesis applies also to all other non-prosodic devices, such as allusions. For allusions, James Liu rightly points out that “[w]hether allusions are used to reveal an analogy or a contrast, they add the authority of past experience to the present occasion, and hence strengthen the poetic effect” (1962, 135). Here, again, his poetic effect is not used in any technical sense.

⁵⁴² This does not necessarily imply any proportional gain in value and/or worthiness in interpretation from increase in appreciation efforts.

⁵⁴³ In the case of classical regulated verse (*lǜshi* 律詩), pentasyllabic and septasyllabic regulated verses can be presented in different “forms” according to tone and rhyming patterns. See James Liu 1962, 26-27.

⁵⁴⁴ An ostensive stimulus is provided as an act of ostension, which is equivalent to a request for the audience’s attention necessary in ostensive-inferential communication. Such a stimulus is required to manifest the communicator’s informative intention. See Sperber and Wilson 2001, 19.

⁵⁴⁵ In Li Bai’s case, however, an understanding of the prosody adopted is an advantage to, but not a necessity in, enhancing a reader’s appreciation of the poem. Li has not in this poem introduced any complex and intricate exploration and development in the traditional prosody prevalent in his time, and, more importantly, the effect as achieved via the ordinary prosodic devices is almost completely overshadowed by the superb imagery created out of the poem. Or, put simply, the prosodic effect has become marginalised by the dominant imagery to the point of insignificance. Under such

Without these standardised devices, a poet could still write poems rich in *shiyi* given his talent and/or efforts,⁵⁴⁶ but it is argued that the better equipped the poet is with a full range of traditional prosodic devices the better equipped he is to compose “truly poetic” work (in terms of *shiyi*).⁵⁴⁷ In comparison, *Sishui* metres as adopted in Wen’s poem have never been formalised and generally accepted, and have, not surprisingly, never attained widespread following and imitation. Put it in another way, although poems composed in *Sishui* metres have literally entered the common **Macro**/macro-context, *Sishui* metres as a kind of prosodic device have since their inception mostly remained in Wen’s own **Micro**/micro-context, rather than infiltrated into the familiar prosody constituent, so to speak, of the **Micro**/micro-context of the general reader. As such, *Sishui* metres, which effectively constitute a nonce form⁵⁴⁸ for his *Sishui* poems, are basically new to every reader of each *Sishui*-metred poem at first reading, or have yet to become “internalised”⁵⁴⁹ by the general reader. In

circumstances, the additional processing efforts required for making the best of the prosody adopted could arguably be unnecessarily large in terms of the cognitive effect that can possibly be achieved, and the prosodic devices are in this sense not that “relevant” to the overall appreciation of the poem.

⁵⁴⁶ It should be noted that in Li Bai’s case, the traditional prosodic devices are adopted, but the poem’s artistic greatness does not hinge on the effect of such devices. It can arguably be suggested that in many if not most cases, prosodic devices, such as rhyming and fixing the number of characters per line, could play only a secondary and supportive role as far as maximisation of *shiyi* is concerned. This should also be true for musical/medolic effect. Music alone, like classical music played by the orchestra, can create cognitive impact. However, when we turn to a poem (or even a *ci*-poem, which is already detached from music), what remains of any musical/medolic effect includes probably only such elements as rhyming and rhythm (the latter closely related to the length of lines), which cannot stand alone to produce any meaningfulness. Thus, it is considered that such separate elements of musical/medolic effect can only play a subsidiary role in enhancing meaningfulness, not to mention creating poetic effect. Cf. also n.474 for the “very weak link” established between rhyming and Pilkington’s poetic effects.

⁵⁴⁷ Of course, the same mechanism applies to other genres of literary works.

⁵⁴⁸ A nonce form is “generally created by a poet for a specific poem but which may, over time, and with repeated usage by subsequent poets, become a ‘received form’”. See Basford, et al. 2009 for the definition of “nonce form”. Julia C. Lin suggests that what Wen advocates in his famous “The Form of Poetry” published in 1926 “is simply the nonce form, which he regarded as ideally flexible, nonarbitrary, and inventive, because it is created to suit a single poetic occasion and experience” (1972, 81).

⁵⁴⁹ If the prosody (or any of such devices) adopted has been “internalised” in the **Micro**/micro-context, interpretation will involve mainly “internal contextualisation”. For instance, Li Bai’s prosody is said to be “internalised” in the reader of his time, while it is generally regarded as “external” to ordinary

addition, any reader will probably remain perplexed by the intricacies of Wen's prosody if the extra processing efforts required for making sense of it, out of its realisation in the poem, have not been made. The reader is, in this case, said to be deprived of the Prosody Benefit in terms of familiarity.

Crucial to the framework introduced in this thesis are the two dimensions mentioned above. For the **width dimension**, further efforts may be spent in external contextualisation to expand the scope of the micro-context through an extensive appropriation process. As for the **depth dimension**, efforts are spent in the intensive interpretation process, i.e. in deepening one's original understanding. Creation of *shiyi* is, from a poet's viewpoint, thus characterised by a continuum of *composing* within the "overlapping area between the *Macro/macro-context* and the *Micro/micro-context* of the general reader" (henceforth the "overlapping area", which is naturally also shared by the poet⁵⁵⁰) and *composing* out of the overlapping area, the former referring mainly to classical Chinese poetry where in most of the cases (especially for individual general readers then) only internal contextualisation (along the depth dimension) is required for worthwhile interpretation, and the latter mainly found in modern poetry where varying degrees of internal contextualisation (along the depth dimension) and external contextualisation (along the width dimension) are required for similarly worthwhile interpretation (i.e. if further interpretation is possible when Type A unintelligibility is ruled out).⁵⁵¹ This continuum, however,

modern readers.

⁵⁵⁰ This overlapping area can, from a reader's viewpoint, also be identified as that shared by the individual reader. In practice, for effective communication, the overlapping area should preferably be shared by the general reader, the poet as well as the individual reader. Besides, this area, unlike Paul Werth's Common Ground (CG), is conceptually speaking assumed to be established well before the reading/interpretation act of the reader. Whereas CG effectively accounts for the mechanism of negotiation between the speaker and hearer during the dialogue, the notion of "overlapping area" deals with the situation, so to speak, before the dialogue begins. As the reader encounters more and more information in his reading of the poem, the information then gradually becomes part of his micro-context to which his subsequent contextualisation attempts can be directed. This may be referred to as expansion of the overlapping area by **enhancement of familiarity within a poem**.

⁵⁵¹ In Wen Yiduo's case, his *Sishui*-metred poems can be considered to be composed within the private area in his micro-context (i.e. the area which is outside of the overlapping area shared by himself and the general reader) as far as *prosody* is concerned, but *other elements* including more traditional prosodic devices and all remaining constituents in his poems should come from the **overlapping area of macro/micro context** (i.e. the area shared by the macro-context and the micro-context), as well as the **Overlapping Area of Macro/Micro-context** (i.e. the area shared by the Macro-context and the

only describes the relative tendency rather than an either-or polar pair. For instance, although it seems possible to compose a poem all within the overlapping area, it is hardly imaginable for a poem to be composed completely outside the overlapping area should the poem be intended to be read and understood by another person, except for the poet being certain of the existence of some overlapping between only his *Micro/micro-context* and his intended reader's without involving the medium of *Macro/macro-context* through the use of the overlapping area (for example the case of a poem being written to one intimate reader and containing confidential information shared only between the two of them).

From the above, it should be clear that for internal contextualisation, the efforts spent in interpretation may be considered minimum, just adequate for worthwhile interpretation, whereas for external contextualisation, the efforts spent in interpretation may become considerably larger as more and more efforts may be invested in the width dimension. Accordingly, the width dimension refers to the direction along which the coverage of a micro-context is extended towards its corresponding macro-context, thereby expanding the confines of the overlapping area. In contrast with the depth dimension, efforts spent in the width dimension cannot contribute to a deeper understanding of oneself; rather, such efforts are to be expended in order to recover details of the ingredients in a poem, with a view to improving on a reader's familiarity with the content of the poem (re. construction of a poetic context).

With reference to our library analogy, internal contextualisation would require one to look into one's repertoire (i.e. what's in one's own mind instead of books out there, and hence the possibility of developing a deeper understanding of one's mind) for worthwhile interpretation of a poem, while external contextualisation would require one to look for (more) books out there (i.e. expending efforts in the width dimension) on a known/familiar subject (as in the case of Li Bai's moon imagery⁵⁵²)

Micro-context). Besides, given enough hints to interpretation, even his prosody can be interpreted by making further reference to classical prosody and/or Western prosody, which lie within the macro-context (requiring external contextualisation) and sometimes also the overlapping area (requiring internal contextualisation). Therefore, it is usually not precise to label any poem as simply composed within or out of the overlapping area. This also implies that no poems intended to serve actual communicative purposes can be composed solely within the private area in the Micro/micro-contexts of their authors (assuming that too many hints will be required for worthwhile interpretation).

⁵⁵² It should be noted that Li Bai possibly pioneered the use of "moon" to symbolise "nostalgia" through its semantic/metaphorical/phonetic link to "reunion". Yang Yi 楊義 concurs with me in this

or on an unknown/unfamiliar subject (as in the case of the traditional prosody used in Li Bai's poem analysed or in the case of Wen's *Sishui* metre, from a modern general reader's viewpoint) for equally worthwhile interpretation of the poem. Worthwhile interpretation, however, can only be obtained if efforts are also expended in the depth dimension, the actual interpretation process. Attention should be given to the fact that internal contextualisation always calls for extra efforts to be spent in the depth dimension, whether or not a reader's repertoire has been expanded by prior external contextualisation through efforts spent in the width dimension, except when the reader is contented with the first impression derived from his first contextualisation attempt in searching the repertoire. Otherwise, efforts will usually be spent further in the depth dimension to dig deeper into the content of the poem, as well as in the reader's mind. This is true also for Li Bai's poem under analysis, based on which we may develop deeper feelings towards our hometown through more intensive introspection.

To further develop the library analogy, a reader may borrow and read more books on the same subject, which represents spending efforts in an appropriation process in both the width dimension (more books out there) and the depth dimension (more on the same subject) in external contextualisation.⁵⁵³ However, efforts spent in this special-case depth dimension are still part of the appropriation process, as only efforts spent in the depth dimension in internal contextualisation are considered to be input into the true interpretation process.⁵⁵⁴

observation. See Yang Yi 2001, 368.

⁵⁵³ In Li Bai's case, it is suggested that subsequent poets might have frequently borrowed his moon symbol in their works. This can be a little bit controversial, considering that, for instance, Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770), one of Li's contemporary poets, also composed a piece titled "Yueye yi shedi" 月夜憶舍弟 (On a moonlit night, thinking of my younger brothers), in which are the lines that read "露從今夜白，月是故鄉明" (Tonight we enter the season of white dew, though the moon still shines with a homeland brightness). See Watson 2009, 144-145 for the original and translation. This poem of Du Fu's, not any less rich in the moon imagery, is dated to 759 A.D. by Xiao and et al. 2004, 452. However, Yang Yi's concurring with Li's pioneering role, as suggested in the previous footnote, forcefully suggests how much Li's work has been attached to the use of the moon imagery. Accordingly, activating Du's moon imagery in the micro-context of a reader of Li Bai's poem can be considered as a result of efforts expended in external contextualisation, provided that Du's moon is not already within the reader's micro-context before his borrowing of books from the "library".

⁵⁵⁴ In other words, those additional books borrowed on the same subject, which can be regarded as the outcome of efforts spent in the width dimension and its corresponding, special-case depth dimension, are internalised in the appropriation process (through reading) for subsequent internal contextualisation (and along the depth dimension if deemed necessary).

A4: The “General Reader” Argument

In view of the findings in the two tables, **A4**⁵⁵⁵ can now be revised as **RA3 (The “General Reader” Argument)**:

It is argued that individual cognitive Micro/micro-contexts of readers in the Chinese community to which they belong should share among them a lot of similar constituents, or these cognitive Micro/micro-contexts have overlapping areas, so as to be able to qualify as different manifestations of the common Micro/micro-context of the implied “general reader”.

Following deliberations in the above, and particularly **RA1**, for poems composed within the *Macro*/macro-context, a reader can use his processing efforts in making sense of those materials lying within the overlapping area through internal contextualisation, and if required, can use extra processing efforts in appropriating those lying inside the *Macro*/macro-context but outside the overlapping area along the width dimension through external contextualisation for subsequent interpretation again through internal contextualisation. In practice, if no extra processing efforts on the width dimension are required, the poem he is reading is then primarily “interpretable through internal contextualisation”, which however may still require extra processing efforts utilised in internal contextualisation along the depth dimension if deemed worthwhile.⁵⁵⁶ As such, the width dimension itself also incorporates its corresponding depth dimension, which illustrates the fact that a reader can always utilise more and more processing efforts as he so wishes, if he does not

⁵⁵⁵ **A4** reads: It is argued that cognitive Micro-contexts of individual readers should share among them a lot of similar constituents, or these cognitive Micro-contexts have overlapping areas, so as to be able to qualify as different manifestations of the common Micro-context of the implied “general reader” (and that, accordingly, cognitive cultural-literary micro-contexts of individual readers should also share among them a lot of similar constituents, or these cultural-literary micro-contexts have overlapping areas, so as to be able to qualify as different manifestations of the common cultural-literary micro-context of the implied “general reader”).

⁵⁵⁶ For instance, a reader who is familiar with classical Chinese poetry will undoubtedly bring into his appreciation elements worthy of attention, including the encounters of the fisherman figure in **C3** with various historical personalities, such as Qu Yuan, so as to be able to substantiate the poem with a lot of extra meanings. This is what we call efforts spent in the depth dimension through internal contextualisation.

care whether the extra efforts only yield diminishing returns over time. But then, according to relevance theory, “optimal relevance” is presumed in communication, and it will not be in the reader’s interest to over-estimate the level of possible gain in cognitive effect so as to make unnecessarily large efforts to process the stimulus, and in the case of poetry reading, to over-pursue in-depth “significance” of, say, the prosodic devices used.⁵⁵⁷ It follows, it can be argued, that in composing a poem, it is to the benefit of a poet to assume that his work will be read by the **general reader** having access to a certain scope of the overlapping area, and accordingly to cater to this general reader and thus minimise the extra processing efforts required by the general reader for achieving optimal relevance. Composing with the general reader (and hence a common ground) in mind, a poet can ensure the existence of an understanding readership, too. Arguing from the other side, if many readers have benefited from the common cultural-literary macro-context and succeeded in forming their strengthened, enhanced micro-contexts necessary for interpreting the poem concerned,⁵⁵⁸ then these individual micro-contexts should arguably share among them a lot of similar constituents, or these micro-contexts have large overlapping areas, so as to be able to qualify as different, partial manifestations of the common micro-context of the general reader. Obviously, the concept of “optimal relevance” only makes sense when the existence of the “general reader”, as well as the author’s knowledge of such a reader, is presumed, or otherwise there will never be any recognisable optimality possible. (Technically speaking, therefore, a “considerate” author should always try to adjust his micro-context so as to enlarge its overlapping area with the general reader’s micro-context.) And, if it is not only the cultural-literary domain of knowledge we are concerned about, but rather the whole of knowledge available, then the argument should become: if many readers have benefited from the Macro-context and succeeded in forming their strengthened, enhanced Micro-contexts necessary for interpreting the poem concerned, then these individual Micro-contexts should arguably share among them a lot of similar constituents, or these Micro-contexts have large overlapping areas, so as to be able to

⁵⁵⁷ This refers to the case of the general reader rather than a scholar or researcher who is willing to expend more efforts in order to achieve even proportionally less returns. Of course, it is also arguable if the scholar or researcher would assess such returns as much more worthwhile than the general reader would do.

⁵⁵⁸ “Strengthened” and “enhanced” are used in the sense that the micro-context has been extended and/or deepened as a result of an input of additional efforts for internalisation before or on reading the text concerned. Should the efforts have been made thoroughly enough or long enough beforehand, the new materials may have been internalised already, so that no further additional efforts will be required for contextualisation.

qualify as different, partial manifestations of the common Micro-context of the general reader.

In addition, it should be pointed out that both “overlapping area” and “the general reader” are **time specific concepts** in that the overlapping area shared by the general reader in Tang dynasty is hardly identical to that in the 21st century. This is manifest when, referring back to our library analogy, the contents of a library at different times are compared. Li Bai’s poem under discussion here might be taken as one composed within the overlapping area shared by the general reader of his time, but as time has passed by, the same poem may be less firmly within the overlapping area shared by the general reader in the 21st century. Likewise, it should be noted that as far as prosody is concerned, for a Tang reader, the prosody used in Li Bai’s poem should be considered within the domain of internal contextualisation rather than that of external contextualisation, as such a reader is supposed to be familiar with the prosody used. In any case, processing efforts spent along the width and depth dimensions are used to overcome the unintelligibility barrier, or help the reader move further away from unintelligibility along the subtlety-unintelligibility continuum. However, subtlety, a possible product of first-level contextualisation, does not imply immediate and autonomous intelligibility in terms of *shiyi*, whose realisation depends on second-level contextualisation through thematising attempts. It is further suggested that existential concerns of today (e.g. romantic love) may be quite different from those of a century ago (e.g. loyalty to the imperial court), so that themes, based on which thematising attempts are directed, should also be time specific concepts. Accordingly, different assessments of a poem in different times, which may be attributed to arbitrary changes in tastes, should also be accounted for by means of the revised hypothesis. As for unsuccessful interpretation of a poem, this may be due to the author’s failure to correctly identify the reader’s powers of reading, appreciation, etc. that can be used in relating, through relevance, the poem to those constituents lying out of his *Micro/micro-context* (which in turn involves identification of the overlapping area). Quite naturally, this failure may become more common as the time gap between the act of writing and the act of reading gets larger.

Practically speaking, it is most important to ask who should qualify as the general reader. Basically, the population of the general reader should be as large and as well read as possible, even though a balance will have to be struck between the two criteria of the size of readership and the knowledgeability of readership. This means that the general reader should, subject to an author’s preference for readership,

involve as many from the reading public of modern Chinese literature as possible. As far as People's Republic of China and other Chinese-speaking communities are concerned, this reading public can, for instance, consist of college graduates, students and those who have received at least a secondary-level education.⁵⁵⁹

A5: The Chineseness Argument

In view of the findings in the tables, **A5**⁵⁶⁰ can now be revised as **RA4 (The Chineseness Argument)**:

It is argued that the poetic language of Chinese is characterised by “Chineseness”, which is a knowledge base that incorporates knowledge of the Chinese literary and cultural tradition in a concise and precise manner, and hence the indispensability, and significance, of “Chineseness” to Chinese literature/poetry.

In essence, Chinese poetry should arguably not distance itself from, but rather embrace Chineseness.⁵⁶¹ In this thesis, this abstract Chineseness is identified with “the embodiment of the overlapping area of the cultural-literary micro/macro-context where the general reader can find anchorage of clues to meanings”.⁵⁶² In retrospect, however, modern poetry has since the very beginning incorporated more and more foreign characteristics, for good or ill. Many modern Chinese poems are even

⁵⁵⁹ See Idema and Haft 1997, 23, where the authors also suggest that a wider audience exists for popular literature. On that understanding, there is also some opportunity cost to be paid when an author, out of his own preference or whatever, opts for writing some high-brow literary writings, which are associated with a correspondingly smaller audience.

⁵⁶⁰ **A5** reads: It is argued that a language is primarily a carrier of the characteristics of the culture of people speaking in that language, and in the case of Chinese, a carrier of “**Chineseness**”, and hence the indispensability, and significance, of “Chineseness” to Chinese literature/poetry.

⁵⁶¹ This “Chineseness”, or the “characteristics of Chinese, and of their culture”, should not be a static concept; rather, it should be a dynamic one incorporating different accepted combinations of characteristics at different times. See Chapter 2 for details regarding definitions and applications of the concept of Chineseness. For further reference, Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈 suggests that “the literary characteristics of a people are always closely related to the character of the people” (1990, 25). Such characteristics can be regarded as manifestations of Chineseness.

⁵⁶² The embodiment incorporates concepts and/or assumptions shared by a group of people, though such concepts and/or assumptions may understandably include misconceptions and wrongly-made assumptions (and hence the necessary distinction between truth and truthfulness).

considered “foreign” or “global” poems written in or translated into Chinese.⁵⁶³ This may not necessarily be bad or harmful to the realisation of *shiyi*, provided that such foreign characteristics have been, through successful assimilation and integration,⁵⁶⁴ absorbed into the common cultural-literary macro-context where the general reader is more rather than less immersed,⁵⁶⁵ and from which he is able to, through external contextualisation, extract and internalise elements relevant to the poem concerned into the cultural-literary micro-context, or the overlapping area, for more effective interpretation through internal contextualisation. Otherwise, the poet has to count on a circle of informed readers who are well-versed in his own micro-context, say through personal contact, specialised schooling, persistently enthusiastic prior reading of his other works or the like, for worthwhile interpretation and appreciation of his works. This in effect would mean expanding both the reader’s micro-context and the overlapping area to a specific direction. Regrettably, in reality, the assimilation and integration of modern, foreign or global elements cannot be regarded as truly successful, and few modern Chinese poets have earned such respect⁵⁶⁶ as to warrant detailed and dedicated study at school.⁵⁶⁷ Consequently, modern Chinese poetry is sometimes regarded as “unintelligible”⁵⁶⁸ to the general reader.

⁵⁶³ It is remarked that “[t]he new poetry [during 1921-26] appeared to be emancipated completely from traditional prosody, and many formal, syntactic, and rhetorical features therein remind one of Western poetry in the hands of Goethe, Wordsworth, or Whitman.” And, over the next ten years, “[W]estern influence on Ch[inese] lit[erature] was conspicuous [...]. In poetry, there was Ger[man] influence on Feng Zhi; Fr[ench influence] on Liang Zongdai, Li Jinfa, and Dai Wangshu; and Eng[lish influence] on Xu Zhimo, Bian Zhilin, and Sun Dayu.” See Preminger and Brogan 1993, 198-199.

⁵⁶⁴ The issue of integration, rather than assimilation, was still subject to heated debate when in 1956, in Taiwan, Ji Xian 紀弦 collected over 100 Taiwanese and mainland poets to sign a manifesto which stressed that modern Chinese poetry would have to be a poetry “horizontally transplanted” from Europe, but not “vertically inherited” from classical China. See *ibid.*, 199.

⁵⁶⁵ A successful example is use of Buddhist ideas which have long been absorbed in the common macro-context since Tang dynasty. The degree of immersion is proportional to the scope of the overlapping area, which depends on efforts spent in extending the boundary of one’s micro-context.

⁵⁶⁶ Michel Hockx has pointed out that, even though not supported by systematically gathered data, he has, “over the years, formed the distinct impression that a large proportion of sophisticated Chinese readers of literature (students and university graduates in the humanities; critics and writers) is unable to muster any respect for modern Chinese poetry”. See Hockx 2004.

⁵⁶⁷ This refers to the high school curricula of Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong in general, which is supposed to offer the students a much easier access than otherwise to materials lying in the macro-context for appropriating into the overlapping area.

⁵⁶⁸ See n.41 for Hockx’s observation.

On the other hand, if a reader goes too far as to, say, take into account “the association of Li Bai’s moon, mentioned earlier, with chastity because of its identification with the goddess Diana [in Roman mythology]”⁵⁶⁹ when reading the poem, he may “justifiably” find some fanciful if not strange interpretation in the poem, such as a husband’s expressing his grievous concern for the virtuous loyalty of his wife in his hometown to him. In doing so, he is in effect reading into the poem something irrelevant, which in this case is nothing other than *Englishness*. Such strange interpretation, of course, will be ruled out by the principle of relevance if, as assumed, Chineseness is considered predominant in the interpretation of Chinese poetry.

A6: The Paradox of Vernacular Benefit Argument

In view of the remarks given in the two appendices, the vernacular benefit is in doubt, especially in the presence of the significance of culture/literary tradition, or Chineseness. As such, **A6**⁵⁷⁰ is sustained, but can be subsumed under consideration of Chineseness as in **RA4** and, by extension, familiarity as in **RA2**.

Besides, it should be pointed out that as long as the notion of writing a poem in one’s mother tongue is upheld, those readers speaking in another dialect may be prevented from enjoying to the full the musical beauty (not necessarily restricted to rhyming, but including also alliteration, rhythm, etc.) with more or less of which any piece of poetic work is supposed to be endowed.⁵⁷¹ In other words, while the popular vernacular-centred idea of “writing [exactly] what one utters” as promulgated throughout the May Fourth Movement may be conducive to relieving a writer of

⁵⁶⁹ This example is given by James Liu to illustrate the existence of notional association (such as the “willow” in Chinese) in English. See James Liu 1962, 11.

⁵⁷⁰ **A6** reads: It is argued that while the May Fourth popular vernacular-centred idea of “*wo shou xie wo kou*” 我手寫我口 (writing [exactly] as one speaks) may be conducive to relieving a writer of many restrictions on writing through the **vernacular benefit**, this idea in practice may actually create an opaque barrier between a poet and his readers which adds to the unintelligibility of modern poetry, considering that everyone has his unique “mouth”, though following promotion, popularisation and proliferation of use of Putonghua in mainland China especially after 1949 such an “ideal” has partly lost its practical significance.

⁵⁷¹ As far as *shiyi* is concerned, musical beauty can be regarded as contributing to familiarity within the poem itself, say, through repetition of regular patterns of stanza within a poem (such as those adopted in regulated verse in classical Chinese), but such familiarity will not necessarily result in *shiyi*.

many restrictions on writing, the very idea put into practice may also be extending an opaque boundary between a poet and his readers, thus somewhat adding to the unintelligibility of modern poetry. It should be emphasised that, as far as rhyming is concerned, classical poems were composed with the “rhyme dictionary” as the primary reference,⁵⁷² thus effectively ridding the poems of any possible discrepancies existing between different Chinese dialects in terms of their sound effects. Now, as modern poetry has become the leading voice, everyone is encouraged to sing his own song, though probably little or barely appreciated by singers and audience of another dialect if too many phonetic features unique to the poet’s mother tongue are stressed.⁵⁷³ It is in this sense that phonetic features of a poem should be investigated as an indispensable and integral part of the common “macro-context”, considering the familiarity that can be attached to these features. Such features, as well as melodic effect, however, is considered to be playing a subsidiary role in enhancing cognitive effect, which is evident in the analysis of Li Bai’s poem presented above when any such feature/melodic effect, if considered useful to enhancement of *shiyi*, is just regarded as complementary if not supplementary.

3.2.4 The Revised Hypothesis/Proposed Theory of *Shiyi*

Should the framework comprising the four revised arguments suggested above be correct in characterising *shiyi*, realisation of *shiyi* is then dependent on how much the argued for is fulfilled. In light of this as well as insights from **Appendix B**

⁵⁷² For instance, first compiled in the Sui Dynasty, *Qieyun* 切韻 [literally “cut rhyme”] (601AD) was one of the most influential rhyming dictionaries intended for codifying and promulgating the standard pronunciation. Its publication was probably related to the fact that “rhyming writing constituted an important part of the official examinations”, and therefore “it was imperative that at least for educational and literary purposes, aspiring scholars follow a standard in pronunciation”. See Ping Chen 1999, 9. See also Ma Meng 1971, 4-5 for a description of how such practice of sticking to rhyming dictionaries resulted in a loss of touch between classical poetry and the real spoken language in phonetic terms over time.

⁵⁷³ A poem composed in Hong Kong’s Cantonese, for instance, may not be fully appreciated by a Putonghua-speaking reader. It is suggested by Stephen Matthews and Virginia Yip that “[t]o the extent that Cantonese is written down at all, it is heavily affected by standard written Chinese, which is based on Mandarin; as a result, there is no clear distinction between what is [written] ‘Cantonese’ and what is [written] ‘Mandarin’[...]” (1994, 1), but aside from diction and vocabulary unique to the local context, the sound effect of Cantonese, as they recognise, is very much different from that of Putonghua. That is why Mandarin and Cantonese are still considered “not mutually intelligible” (ibid., 5).

(where *shiyi* is further defined as “a sense of immediate embrace of enhanced truthfulness that is resulted from reading of a poem through thematising attempts by a reader made against (un)familiarising meaningful units in the poem”), the definition of *shiyi*⁵⁷⁴ can be refined as follows:

Shiyi, which is characterised by a subtlety-unintelligibility continuum where subtlety is the very measure of potential realisation of *shiyi*,⁵⁷⁵ is a sense of awareness of one’s immediate embrace of improved truthfulness derived from appreciation over a distance, and through thematising efforts along directions of existential concerns, of a poem’s (un)familiarisation techniques,⁵⁷⁶ whose (un)familiarising effect is enhanced through employment of Chineseness and traditional and/or familiar prosodic devices, all being constituents of the common macro-context of the general reader in the Chinese community concerned.

This definition of *shiyi* has duly incorporated the revised arguments put forward in the above,⁵⁷⁷ and is posited here as the working definition for analysis of Chinese poems (and hence “Chineseness” and “Chinese” in the definition)⁵⁷⁸ in the next chapter. It should be noted that this definition of *shiyi* is especially devised to cater to poetry appreciation, so that it is not referring to mere truthfulness, but an awareness of it, assuming that interpretation of poetry is inseparable from appreciation, which is

⁵⁷⁴ To recap, in the hypothesis posited in Chapter 1, *shiyi* is defined as “a kind of worthwhile cognitive effect associated with subtlety, resulting from reading of poetry, and the stronger the cognitive effect felt, the higher the level of *shiyi*, and the more poetic the poem concerned is considered.

⁵⁷⁵ Subtlety as the measure of potential realisation of *shiyi* can be understood in terms of relevance of a poem, which is the degree of the poem’s possession of meaningful units considered *relevant to* truthfulness enhancement. Such possession, however, need not necessarily result in realisation of *shiyi*, which is subject to successful thematisation attempts.

⁵⁷⁶ Such techniques can include unfamiliarised familiarity and familiarised unfamiliarity, which can be used to characterise various forms of rhetorical devices such as exaggeration, repetition, metaphor, suspense, oxymoron, parallelism, etc. When any of the rhetorical devices are spotted in the analysis of poetry in the following chapter, their effect will be identified as far as possible.

⁵⁷⁷ Accordingly, this definition should not be used out of the context and without reference to the four supporting arguments of the revised hypothesis.

⁵⁷⁸ As suggested in Chapter 1, n.117, this Chineseness can be substituted by, say, Englishness if it is poetry composed in English that is our concern.

an acknowledgement or recognition of the value attached to the poem concerned.⁵⁷⁹ Truthfulness, in turn, depends on enhanced understanding developed on a particular subject matter (the theme) dealt with in the poem in question. If its explanatory power is proved to be sufficient for satisfactory analysis of poems, the definition is considered to have its operationality confirmed, and hence the practical soundness of the proposed theory of *shiyi*.

3.3 HOW THE REVISED HYPOTHESIS OPERATES?

The revised hypothesis as it stands now is composed of the revised theory of *shiyi*, which is supported by four revised arguments (RA1 to RA4).

In analysing a “poem”⁵⁸⁰ according to the hypothesis, clues to interpretation, which comprise **meaningful units** (such as characters, longer expressions or whole lines in a poem) capable of producing (un)familiarising cognitive effect,⁵⁸¹ will first be identified. These units will then be referred to interact with other meaningful units within and without the poem as appropriate by means of a **contextualisation mechanism**, and specifically from a reader’s viewpoint, with other meaningful units within and without the **Micro/micro-context** of the reader (or on and out of his mind) as appropriate through **internal contextualisation** (relying on references readily found in his **Micro/micro-context**) and **external contextualisation** (relying on references *not* readily found in his **Micro/micro-context**) respectively. Such referral represents realisation of **relevance** (in the sense of “intermediary” according to our interpretation of relevance theory), which in the case of ordinary communication should be directed to (fulfilment of) the aim of communication (or to the speaker’s intention in verbal communication). In the case of poetry, however, relevance should, *in addition*, be directed to (maximisation of) *shiyi*, as the (revised) hypothesis which has opted for a valuation approach suggests, through thematising efforts along directions of **existential concerns** hopefully culminating in enhancement of

⁵⁷⁹ This agrees with the valuation approach adopted for the hypothesis.

⁵⁸⁰ A “poem”, which refers to one found in a published collection of works such as those referred to in Chapter 1, n.36, has its status of “poem” implied in its inclusion in such a collection. This “poem” status is the starting point of our analysis, which in the end, however, may be refuted according to our definition of *shiyi*. Until its status is refuted, it is still referred to as a poem in this thesis.

⁵⁸¹ Such (un)familiarising cognitive effect is supposed to effect a change to the reader’s representation of the world, which is strengthened by familiarising cognitive effect and reversed/revised by unfamiliarising cognitive effect. See n.583 below for more detail.

truthfulness, the basis of *shiyi*. Thematisation, as such, can be considered characterising the second, and higher, level of contextualisation efforts still based on internal/external contextualisation, with **themes**, as various as appropriate to individual poems concerned, being **maximisers** of *shiyi*. **Subtlety**, the measure of potential realisation of *shiyi*, is conceptualised in terms of (un)familiarising effect derived from the first-level contextualisation, which indicates the opening of the meaningful units concerned to possible thematisation.⁵⁸²

It is noted that an accumulation of positive cognitive effect need not result in *shiyi*, because positive cognitive effect is supposed to bring forth an improvement in the representation of the world, and in the case of literature, an improvement in the representation of the poetic world (or poetic context), but not the truthfulness of the (poetic) world regarding existential concerns, in terms of enhanced understanding developed on a particular subject matter (the theme) dealt with in the poem in question.⁵⁸³ It is therefore through the interaction of familiarising cognitive effect and unfamiliarising cognitive effect (via familiarising techniques and unfamiliarising techniques respectively), which help to thoroughly explore, or concretise, the theme concerned, that *shiyi* is likely to emerge.

Chronologically speaking, at first, initial internal contextualisation attempts are made by a reader first encountering a poem. As one's experience tells, such attempts can readily determine whether the poem is **meaningful** in terms of building of the

⁵⁸² It should be noted that subtlety is, as defined, a measure of potential realisation of *shiyi*, which is closely related to concepts such as suggestiveness and indeterminacy, so whether the poem is subtle or not depends on whether it is open to possible thematisation.

⁵⁸³ As quoted earlier (see n.65), "a positive cognitive effect is (roughly) an improvement in the hearer's representation of the world, such as acquisition of a true and useful belief" (Lycan 2008, 166). This improvement in the hearer's representation of the world is related to "the world" where we are all inhabiting, so it is more about truth about "the world". In case of literature and in this thesis, however, a positive cognitive effect is considered an improvement in the reader's representation of the poetic world (or poetic context), so it is more about *truth* about this poetic world. When it comes to *shiyi*, it is an awareness of a special kind of positive cognitive effect that is enhancement of *truthfulness* of the world regarding existential concerns not achievable and derivable through, say, scientific methods centring on truth-seeking. This highlights the basic difference between human sciences (which in a way deal with abstract concepts such as love, *shiyi*, etc. that cannot be pinned down by scientific methods) and natural sciences (which should still apply in the poetic world to make it comparable to the real world) in terms of truth(-seeking). Accordingly, it is only natural to find that **themes** of poems are mostly abstract concepts related to existential concerns of humans.

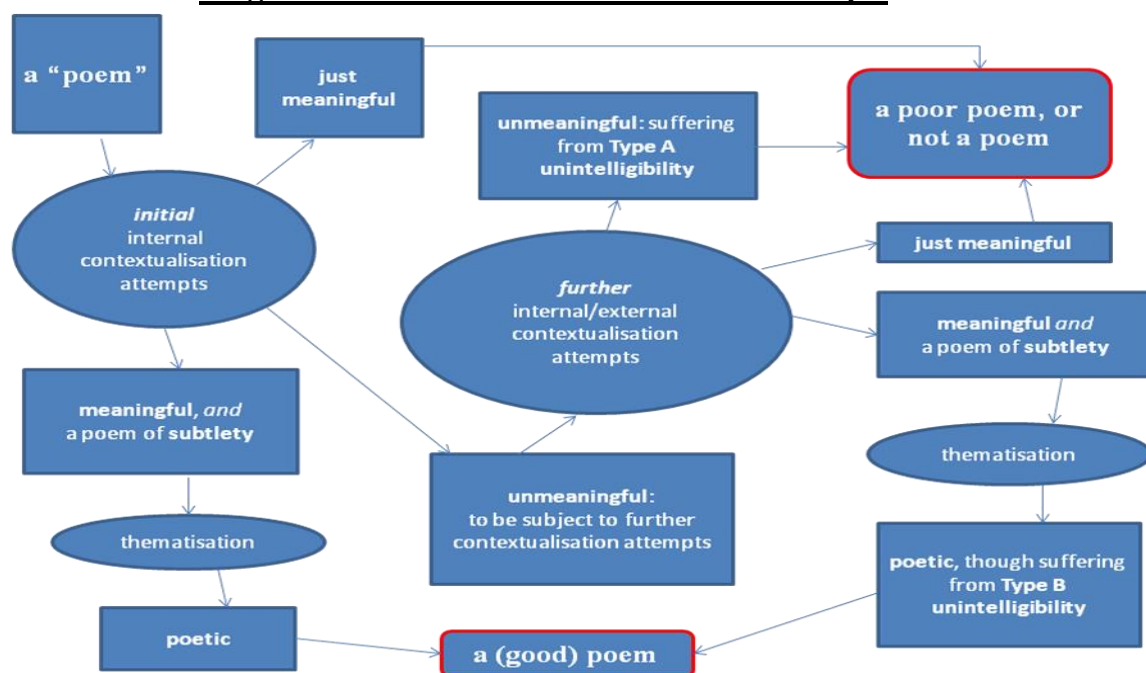
poetic world, or it is as yet **unmeaningful** pending further efforts of interpretation. Meaningfulness is considered to be based on understanding of basically what is written literally.⁵⁸⁴ Such literal understanding, however, is basic but not automatically leading to *shiyi*.

If, after further (e.g. a sufficiently large number of) internal, and sometimes with also external, contextualisation attempts to make sense of (part of) a poem,⁵⁸⁵ the interpreter, supposedly a **general reader** (i.e. an individual reader who is considered to be possessing the same Micro/micro-context as the general reader) here, still fails to make good sense of it in terms of building of the poetic world, the poem concerned is considered suffering from **Type A unintelligibility** (i.e. unintelligibility arising from unmeaningfulness of the poem), and should be regarded as a *bad poem* or *not a poem* at all. By contrast, if the interpreter is able to make good sense of the poem in terms of building of the poetic world by means of initial internal contextualisation attempts but without production of (un)familiarising effect, then the poem is considered meaningful yet non-subtle (i.e. unlikely to be open to thematisation), and should be regarded as a *poor poem* or *non-poem*.

Or such a meaningful poem can also be a work of **subtlety**, subject to further contextualisation attempts to see if there really can be subtlety in the poem, which may warrant realisation of *shiyi*. If difficulties in interpretation are to be overcome only after further internal/external contextualisation attempts, which finally succeed in making good sense of the poem in terms of *shiyi*, then the poem is considered to be suffering from a certain degree of **Type B unintelligibility** (i.e. unintelligibility arising from insufficient efforts expended in interpretation of the poem). If, in another case, the interpreter is able to make good sense of the poem in terms of *shiyi* by means of initial internal contextualisation attempts, then the poem is considered a (good) poem. Graphically, the effect of contextualisation attempts can be represented in the following, where *shiyi* is expressed by “poetic” (i.e. rich in *shiyi*):

⁵⁸⁴ This understanding is, in turn, based on the first-level (lower-level) interpretation introduced in the hypothesis in Chapter 1.

⁵⁸⁵ Such attempts refer to the second-level (higher-level) interpretation introduced in the hypothesis in Chapter 1.

Diagram 3.1: Effect of Contextualisation Attempts⁵⁸⁶

3.4 POINTS TO NOTE CONCERNING THE REVISED HYPOTHESIS

It should be noted that the existence of subtlety can in a particular way *guarantee* the derivation of a certain degree of *shiyi*. As its definition dictates, *shiyi* is an awareness of immediate embrace of improved truthfulness, which in some cases can be a sense of **unknownness** that is worshipped as a kind of unattainable higher truth. Under such circumstances, thematisation along the particular theme of “unattainable higher truth” will very likely result in *shiyi*.

According to relevance theory, the expenditure of processing efforts should be commensurate with the resulting cognitive effect, so that more processing efforts should only be justified by enhanced cognitive effect. But according to what is proposed in Diagram 3.1 above, it is noted that such simple, short-term cost-benefit analysis may not fully apply to literature, as in the case when a poem is identified as

⁵⁸⁶ For the sake of simplicity in graphical representation, “thematisation” in the circles represents “successful thematisation attempt(s)”, which naturally result(s) in a “poetic” appraisal in the squares that follow in the direction of the arrows. Unsuccessful thematisation attempts, as well as their result (naturally a “subtle but non-poetic” appraisal, followed by a “a poor poem, or not a poem” conclusion), are not shown in the diagram. N.B.: Only the “thematisation” in the circle on the right involves the possibility of having an appraisal that includes “though suffering from Type B unintelligibility”.

poetic, or rich in *shiyi*, by means of merely initial internal contextualisation attempts. The poem by Li Bai (“Jing ye si”) as analysed earlier can be a case in point. Such a poem can return its reader a great deal of *shiyi* without requiring him to spend too much processing effort, and the level of *shiyi* as produced may not be lower than any good poem which however requires more processing effort from the reader. This can be explained by the fact that more has been done by the author (Li Bai in this case) in his writing to present his version of truthfulness regarding the theme in the poetic context. Another type of possible case is when more relevant information from external contextualisation is internalised in the Micro/micro-context of a reader before his reading, his initial internal contextualisation attempts, now based on an enlarged Micro/micro-context from “**advanced**” expenditure of effort, will already be sufficient for effective comprehension and early identification and appreciation of *shiyi*. This is contrasted with another reader possessing less relevant information at a first reading, who has thus to rely on further processing effort on externalisation. Of course, this also suggests the unavoidable discrepancies in individual Micro/micro-contexts, as there can never be complete overlapping between such contexts.

Besides, it is possible for part of the poem to be subtle to qualify the whole poem for thematisation processing. In other words, even if a large portion of the poem is not meaningful, the poem can still be referred to go through thematisation should another portion be adequately subtle. If it turns out that the subtle portion is able to produce a high level of *shiyi* by means of thematisation, even if the unmeaningful (and hence non-subtle) portion remains unmeaningful, this unmeaningful portion will still be enhanced to assuming the status of unknownness, and thereby reinforcing the *shiyi* of the subtle portion.

3.5 SUMMARY:

This chapter is devoted to revising the hypothesis developed in Chapter 1. In doing so, the proposed framework is revisited through deliberation within the parameters as laid down in Chapter 2. The six original arguments are now revised, refined and regrouped as four arguments, and the proposed theory of *shiyi* reworked, giving rise to an integrated approach having incorporated a number of identified approaches and/or concepts that can be used to analyse poems in the next chapter. A graphical representation is also given to further illustrate how the hypothesis can be applied. In the next chapter, a number of modern poems will be analysed by means

of the proposed framework so as to find out if this framework can help resolve the research problem, namely the justifiability of attributing a poorer reception to modern Chinese poetry due to the unintelligibility problem.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF REPRESENTATIVE POEMS

4.1 A NOTE ON SELECTION OF POETS/POEMS:

As highlighted in Chapter 1, it is generally acknowledged that modern Chinese poetry has received much less attention than classical Chinese poetry.⁵⁸⁷ Compared to the history of classical Chinese poetry, the history of modern Chinese poetry has aroused almost as much controversy as Chinese history of the same period. If *shiyi* is the main criterion for judging how much attention should justifiably be given to a poem, it should be possible to determine whether it is justified for modern poetry to receive less than its “fair” share, by applying the revised hypothesis developed in the previous chapter.

Since the hypothesis is built on the criterion of *shiyi*, a measure of a poem’s artistic value, it will be circular if poems for analysis are selected solely for their *shiyi* as perceived by the author of this thesis. Accordingly, modern poems are selected with reference to, if possible, both of their artistic value (i.e. *shiyi* or whatever it is referred to as the assessment criterion) and historical significance as reflected by their inclusion in some anthologies with established reception and/or academic recognition.⁵⁸⁸ For those selected from the poets’ collected works, they usually appear in such anthologies as well. However, it should be noted that a degree of *subjectivity* is again unavoidable in making the selection below. The best one can do is “declare interest” as much as possible, spelling out the particular reason(s) behind, if any, for the selection.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁷ See, for instance, Yeh 1991, 2.

⁵⁸⁸ For historical or other reasons, some works may have attracted more attention than their artistic value would have justified, and a case in point is Hu Shi’s *Experimental Verses*, which, though generally regarded as of limited artistic value, effectively established the sub-genre of new poetry in China. See also n.44 for more information.

⁵⁸⁹ Actually the selection can be compared to writing a history of poetry. On that regard, it is noted that “[i]n practice, no literary history has ever been written without some principles of selection and some attempt at characterization and evaluation” (Wellek and Warren 1973, 43). And, in more detail, Wellek remarks earlier that “such a history cannot be written without a frame of reference, a standard of selection and evaluation which will be influenced by our own time and determined by our own theory of literature” (1955, 5). The selection here is, accordingly, never completely detached from the theory on *shiyi* proposed in the thesis.

4.2 ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN THE ANALYSIS OF POEMS:

In the following, a number of modern poems are analysed by adopting the proposed theoretical framework of the revised hypothesis. Notice should be given to the fact that due to the time and space constraints, it is impossible to analyse *all possible* interpretations of a poem. As such, only the most common and/or convincing interpretation of a poem will be analysed in accordance with the revised hypothesis. Again, same as the selection of poems/poets, this choice of interpretations can be subject to the criticism of *subjectivity*, a certain degree of which is also unavoidable though.

For the purposes of clarity of presentation, all poems under analysis are contained in **Appendix C**, while the actual analysis process will be conducted with reference to the tables found in this chapter.

For ease of reference, a poem placed in Appendix C is presented in a way so that the lines in the original (on the left) will be placed side by side with the translation⁵⁹⁰ (on the right), with the number of line/stanza also given on the left for identification purposes. The original lines in Chinese will be cut into different (meaningful) units by slash (/) signs for convenience of analysis.

The tables in this chapter are reserved for displaying the process of actual analysis according to the hypothesis. As they appear in the tables below, the clues, which comprise meaningful units as identified in the poem, will be referred to other meaningful units within and without the poem, as well as within and without the Micro-context/micro-context of a general reader (as represented by the author of this

⁵⁹⁰ In translating the poems selected for analysis, I adopt the principle of achieving “dynamic equivalence” as promulgated by Eugene A. Nida and Jin Di in their co-authored *On Translation* (1984), as contained in Nida and Jin 2006, 1-192. In essence, they contend that “[r]ather than attempting to defend literal or free translating or trying to reconcile the two by aiming at a compromise [...], it is more helpful to approach the problem from a different perspective [...], and that is to strive for their “dynamic equivalence translation”, which “can be so well understood by receptors of the target language text that they can fully appreciate how the original receptors responded to the original text”; and they argue that instead of focusing attention on the relationship of the source text to the target text, it is better to concentrate on roughly achieving equivalence between “the relation of target language receptors to the target language text” and “the relationship between the original receptors and the original text”. See *ibid.*, 94-95.

thesis), as appropriate. Such referral represents relevance (in the sense of “intermediary” according to our interpretation of relevance theory), which in the case of poetry should, as the hypothesis argues, be directed to (maximisation of) *shiyi*. Unless otherwise specified, the meaningful unit singled out for analysis, whether it is a single character, an expression of a few characters, a whole line or a structure of lines, will be analysed *as a whole*, and any effect assigned to it will also be attributed to the unit *as a whole*. Abbreviations and symbols used in the analysis tables are specified below:

+CE	positive cognitive effect (the higher this +CE, the clearer and/or more detailed the picture of the poetic world/context)
FE	familiarising cognitive effect
UE	unfamiliarising cognitive effect
NE	neutral cognitive effect (roughly having nil effect on enhancement of +CE)
MiC	the Micro-context, comprising all knowledge available to an individual reader (assumed to be a general reader)
mic	the cultural-literary micro-context, part of the Micro-context, comprising just cultural-literary knowledge available to an individual reader (assumed to be a general reader)
MaC	the Macro-context, a knowledge base comprising all available knowledge <i>out there</i>
mac	cultural-literary macro-context, part of the Macro-context, comprising just cultural-literary knowledge <i>out there</i>
OA	the Overlapping Area between the “Macro-context” and the “Micro-context of a general reader”
oa	the overlapping area between the “macro-context” and the “micro-context of a general reader”
T	title of poem
S	stanza of poem (e.g. S1 represents the first stanza of the poem)
L	line of poem (e.g. L1 represents the first line of the poem)

4.2.1 Analysis of Poems

(M1) Zhu Xiang's 朱湘 "Dang pu" 當舖 (A Pawnshop, 1925⁵⁹¹):

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined ⁵⁹²
T	當舖 (A Pawnshop): This suggests a possible theme of exchange, which should be a proxy for something else yet unknown to the reader. A <u>suspension</u> is created as to what exchange refers to. (+CE) ⁵⁹³
1	美開了一家當舖 ("Beauty" has opened a pawnshop): This lays down the time, the character and the place for the poetic world, where 美 (Beauty) is characterised as a pawnbroker, and represents one party involved in the exchange. (+CE) (UE) ⁵⁹⁴
2	專 (Specialising): This limits the whole analogy to concerning only the business of 心 (heart), i.e. love affairs. (+CE) (UE) 收人的心 (holding men's hearts): A <u>strange collocation</u> . (UE)

⁵⁹¹ For the original in Chinese and year of composition, see Xie and Jiang 2010, 544.

⁵⁹² In the right column, every box is dedicated to analysis of one line of the poem ("poem line"). A clue to interpretation is placed in the first line in every box in the right column, and relevance and (un)familiarising techniques are indicated underneath the line containing their corresponding clue to interpretation. If more clues in the same poem line have to be analysed, the next clue will be placed underneath the line containing descriptions of relevance and techniques of the earlier clue. The same practice applies to all similar analysis tables in this chapter.

⁵⁹³ In this (the first) table, availability of +CE indicates whether it is successful to help the reader to (re)construct the poetic world.

⁵⁹⁴ In this table, availability of FE/UE indicates openness to contextualisation, and hence "subtlety", a measure of possible realisation of *shiyi* (which is made through thematisation). The meaningful units which produce FE/UE here are more likely to produce FE/UE on the identified theme(s) through thematisation.

3	<p>到期 (When it is time): This suggests that, like everything else in the world, love has its expiry date. (+CE) (UE)</p> <p>贖 (redeem): This implies that the business should be a fair trade. (+CE)</p> <p>贖[心] (redeem [heart]): A <u>strange collocation</u>. (UE)</p>
4	<p>它已經關門 (The shop is shut): 美 (Beauty) has closed her 當舖 (pawnshop) too early (已經[關門], i.e. “already closed”). The time-limitedness of “beauty” and “love” is highlighted here by the <u>surprising ending</u> of the poem. (+CE) (UE)</p>

Analysis:

From the above table, it can be argued that exchange, beauty and heart can be possible themes of this poem. Aside from the matter centring on the theme, it is noted that this poem can be contextualised, and thus interpreted (supported by instances of +CE in T and all of four lines), without relying much on references outside of *a* general reader’s **MiC**, so it is a **meaningful** poem interpretable through **internal contextualisation**. This is achievable through the use of some simple images or concepts of pawnshop, beauty⁵⁹⁵, door, etc., which apparently lie within the **OA**. As most images and/or concepts involved in the meaningful units are considered constituents of general knowledge rather than cultural-literary knowledge, it seems appropriate to apply the concept of **OA** (rather than **oa**) in analysis of this poem. Besides, the widespread presence of +CE in this poem represents the poet’s success in assisting the reader to (re)construct a poetic world through enhancing the reader’s understanding of that world. Such a world, however, is just the necessary condition for producing *shiyi*.

Given the possible themes as identified, initial attempts to thematise the poem cannot be too fruitful because of possible dissipation of cognitive effort. Thus, at this stage,

⁵⁹⁵ Beauty is actually an abstract concept whose exact meaning is difficult to pin down, as mentioned in n.98, Chapter 1. But in this poem, the poet is considered to have taken the meaning of “beauty”, a possible theme of this poem, as granted in explicating another concept, love, supposedly a preferred theme of the poem, as will be explained shortly.

it is **Type A unintelligibility**, but not **Type B unintelligibility**, that can be ruled out.

For ease of reference, different effects of the poem are summarised in the table below with indication of possible thematisation attempts made with reference to the identified possible theme(s):

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s)
T	當舖 (A Pawnshop)	+CE	<u>possible theme</u> : exchange [as concretised by pawnshop]
1	美開了一家當舖 (“Beauty” has opened a pawnshop)	+CE UE	<u>possible theme</u> : beauty theme-unfamiliarising (if theme = beauty)
2	專 (Specialising)	+CE UE	no theme
	收人的心 (holding men’s hearts)	UE	<u>possible theme</u> : heart theme-unfamiliarising (if theme = heart)
3	到期 (When it is time)	+CE UE	theme-familiarising (if theme = exchange)
	贖 (redeem)	+CE	theme-familiarising (if theme = exchange)
	贖[心] (redeem [heart])	UE	theme-unfamiliarising (if theme = heart/exchange)
4	它已經關門 (The shop is shut)	+CE UE	no theme

As for the issue on theme, it is suggested, from initial thematisation attempts, that of the three possible themes (exchange, beauty and heart), none stands out as the most appropriate *shiyi* maximiser as each has its associated theme-(un)familiarising meaningful units. However, if the three are linked up together for consideration, love will emerge as a preferred theme incorporating all of exchange, beauty and heart. In this case, all identified theme-(un)familiarising meaningful units can now be associated with love as the identified theme. This clearly shows that if the identified theme (say exchange) is actually not quite different from what is literally described in the poem (say the act of exchange), any (un)familiarisation attempts during the

second-level contextualisation process will not result in too much enhanced truthfulness, and hence improvement in *shiyi* will be quite limited. This is significant, understandably, because the resulting *shiyi* will be used to justify if the identified theme concerned should have been adopted in the first place.

On the above understanding, it can be argued that the poet tries to investigate the inner nature of love, the theme, in the poem through the use of the imagery of a pawnshop. Here, the time-limitedness of beauty/love is illustrated by the untimely, unsuccessful redemption attempt made by the ticket-holder. The time-limitedness of “beauty” and “love” highlighted in the poem is implied in that of a pawn ticket, the flimsy, date-stamped proof of the deal. The unfaithful, untimely closing of the door by one party, “beauty”, in the face of the other implies the arbitrary one-sidedness of the deal, or the absence of equality in a love affair.⁵⁹⁶

As to **prosody**, this single-stanza poem is a regulated verse with only simplistic prosody: L1 and L3 each has seven characters, and L2 and L4 each has five characters, and an “abab” rhyming scheme is adopted so that L1 and L3 rhyme with each other (鋪 *pu* and 贖 *shu*), and so do L2 and L4 (心 *xin* and 門 *men*). As far as *shiyi* is concerned, however, such prosody does not seem to have a strong enhancement effect based on (un)familiarity.

(Un)familiarity is possible only if the poem is composed taking into account the **oa** and/or the **OA**. Although a general reader of China in the 1920s should be more familiar with the operation of a pawnshop than, say, one in the affluent Hong Kong of our time, the latter would encounter no difficulties in interpreting the poem. Accordingly, the intelligibility of the poem at this stage represents the poet’s success

⁵⁹⁶ If a reader *chooses* to spend more or extra effort along the depth dimension in internal contextualisation, he can develop, say, some more complicated interpretation as follows: If one gives his heart to a woman out of admiration of her beauty, it seems impossible for this investment to be profitable; rather, he is doomed to lose his heart in the end. In fact, one lacking in money would voluntarily, temporarily surrender his own belongings or treasures to a pawnshop only when he has real hope of redeeming them by the due date, otherwise he would, if possible, simply have them sold once and for all. Thus, suggesting that love involves a genuinely reciprocal act of exchange, give and take, the poet seems to be cynical about the eternal value of love, even before the fickle pawnbroker closes her doors on the faithful customer. Or arguably, the poet may be suggesting that there is a kind of true love not built on mere skin-deep beauty: one should probably try patronising another pawnshop run by a pawnbroker other than beauty. For as a matter of fact, human beauty is sure to fade only “too early”.

in identifying the core **OA** (rather than **oa**, as suggested above)

As for thematisating attempts, these are possible when the poet has deployed units possessing theme-(un)familiarising effect in the poem. For instance, there is the use of strange collocation in L1 (“Beauty” has opened a pawnshop), which is theme-unfamiliarising, informing the reader of some peculiar aspects of love as the theme. Besides, there are a few familiarising units in L2 (holding men’s hearts) and L3 (“When it is time” and “redeem [heart]”), which strengthen the reader’s understanding of love. Such (un)familiarising units are able to concretise love through providing a vivid picture of “how love can be” to the reader within a short duration.⁵⁹⁷ With such concretisation, the reader is able to enhance his understanding of a fundamental truth about loving relationships. *Shiyi* lies exactly in the reader’s awareness of this enhanced understanding of truthfulness of love.

Following the above analysis, the poem can be regarded as a **good poem** (in terms of *shiyi*) lying closer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** (i.e. still suffering from a low degree of **Type B unintelligibility**).

(M2) Bian Zhilin’s 卞之琳 “Duan zhang” 斷章 (Fragments, 1935):⁵⁹⁸

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined
T	斷章 (Fragments): This doesn’t inform the reader too much of either the theme or information of the poetic world. (NE)
1	你 (You): “You” is portrayed as facing the world.

⁵⁹⁷ It can be argued that suggesting “*how* love can be”, rather than “*what* love is”, is more effective in pinning down the meaning of love. After all, asking a what question is like trying to get a definition, which is not a very effective means of getting an answer as far as an abstract concept is concerned.

⁵⁹⁸ A translation by Mary M. Y. Fung and David Lunde is used for analysis. See Fung 2006a, 94. N.B.: The title was translated as “Fragments” instead of “Fragment” adopted in Fung’s book, because “Fragments” is more appropriate when used to convey the sense of fragmentation the poet, as we see it, perceives in his world.

	<p>(+ CE)</p> <p>站在橋上 (standing/on bridge):</p> <p>This implies that “you” is neither nearer to this side (of the river) nor nearer to that side, i.e. caught in a dilemma.</p> <p>(+ CE)</p>
2	<p>看風景的人 (viewer):</p> <p>This is introduced as another party in the poetic world. The <u>repetition</u> of 看風景 of L1 adds <u>familiarity</u> to the poem.⁵⁹⁹</p> <p>(+ CE) (FE)</p> <p>在樓上看你 (on the balcony is viewing you):</p> <p>This places a distance between the two parties, and the looking/viewing adds to <u>familiarity</u>, while change of the object being looked at/viewed adds to <u>unfamiliarity</u>.</p> <p>(+ CE) (FE) (UE)</p>
3	<p>明月裝飾了你的窗子 (The moon adorns your window):</p> <p>窗子 (window) is where one looks through to see the world. Now, there’s the 明月 (Bright moon) to adorn one’s world, to quite enduringly stay in one’s mind.</p> <p>(+ CE) (UE)</p>
4	<p>你裝飾了別人的夢 (You adorn someone else’s dream):</p> <p>While you’re searching for what you want, you are probably unaware of that you are also adorning another person’s “夢” (“dream”), i.e. his dream world. <u>Parallelism</u> with L3 creates <u>(un)familiarity</u>.</p> <p>(+ CE) (FE) (UE)</p>

Analysis:

As the above table indicates, there is not any meaningful unit recognised as the obvious theme. After reading the whole poem, it can be argued that “fragments” can be a possible theme, which will be dealt with later. It is noted that this poem can be contextualised, and thus interpreted (supported by instances of +CE in all four lines), without relying much on references outside of a general reader’s MiC, so it is a **meaningful** poem interpretable through **internal contextualisation**. As with similar poems, such as Zhu Xiang’s “Dang pu” analysed earlier, this is achieved through the use of some simple images and/or concepts of bridge, view, moon, window and dream, which apparently lie within the OA. The presence of +CE throughout this poem is

⁵⁹⁹ See n.550 for illustration of such “enhancement of familiarity within a poem”.

indicative of success in establishing a poetic world by enhancing a reader's understanding of that world, which, as suggested earlier, is just the necessary condition for *shiyi* derivation.

Given the possible theme of “fragments” as identified, initial attempts to thematise the poem can be made in the following table. Still, at this stage, only **Type A unintelligibility** can be ruled out.

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s)
T	斷章 (Fragments)	NE	<u>possible theme</u> : Fragments
1	你 (You)	+ CE	no theme
	站在橋上 (standing/on bridge)	+ CE	no theme
2	看風景的人 (viewer)	+ CE FE	no theme
	在樓上看你 (on the balcony is viewing you)	+ CE FE UE	no theme
3	明月裝飾了你的窗子 (The moon adorns your window)	+ CE UE	no theme
4	你裝飾了別人的夢 (You adorn someone else's dream)	+ CE FE UE	no theme

This time, the above table fails to provide clues as to how the meaningful units can be used to thematise the poem, because, obviously, all lines must be read together for effective thematisation. This is also reflected by our indecisiveness at first to identify a theme.

Accordingly, it can be argued that the poem depicts a fragmented world, a world viewed from different angles. At first, it's “a world-facing-a person” situation, emphasising the solitude therein. Then, another person is introduced into this world as someone having a different perspective, according to which the subject of “you” has become the object of the “viewer”. Seemingly unfamiliarising on a larger scale than that depending only on keywords, this subject-turned-object reverses the direction of our train of thought, providing us with another fragment with which to weave a new picture. L3 reveals the moon as something which you have always

longed for but is unreachable (which may, though not necessarily, be referred to the moon imagery in Chineseness/MaC), and L4, yet creating another instance of large-scale unfamiliarisation, abruptly discloses a world marked by interrelatedness, in which you may have been the object of another person's desire. Having developed this understanding, it is possible now to combine all the fragments into a whole picture of interrelatedness.⁶⁰⁰ With such concretisation of fragments (or its opposite, interrelatedness), the reader is able to enhance his understanding of a fundamental truth about this fragmentary yet interrelated nature of individual lives. *Shiyi* lies exactly in the reader's awareness of this enhanced understanding of this pair of concepts, which are actually two sides of the same coin.

As to **prosody**, this single-stanza poem is not considered a regulated verse in its strictest sense. Its prosody, if anything in that sense of the word, is at most only simplistic if noticeable at all. As far as *shiyi* is concerned, such prosody does not seem to have any enhancement effect, except in terms of (un)familiarity, which is basic but need not necessarily be conducive to *shiyi*.

Also considered a work of "subtlety", "Fragments" enables a reader to (re)construct the poetic world through efforts processing a work composed on the basis of **familiarity** to the **general reader**. The "clues to interpretation" as shown in the table guide the reader in (re)constructing the poetic world through the text-reader distance. Since the clues, including all the simple images/concepts (such as "fragment", "window" and "dream") employed, are all readily comprehensible, minimum processing efforts, and almost nil additional efforts (with respect to prosody or other aspects), are required, and these clues are considered to be in the **OA**.⁶⁰¹ This is testament to Bian's delicacy in targeting the core of the **OA**. Again, just like **M1**, no particular references to the **mac** of the classical tradition have been detected,

⁶⁰⁰ For a reader who *chooses* to spend more or extra effort along the depth dimension in internal contextualisation, he will develop, say, some more complicated interpretation such as the following: The title of the poem, "Fragments", is highly relevant to the above interpretation. It implies that the poem is like a broken mirror. When the shattered pieces are gathered together the fragments may prove to be more suggestive, though after all the images so formed still cannot be compared to the whole image on an intact mirror. As such, the poet may be suggesting that we human beings are inevitably confined by our limited vision, so as to be able to produce at best a merely fragmented picture of the actual world.

⁶⁰¹ Compared to Zhu Xiang's "A pawnshop", Bian's work has the added advantage of adopting imagery which is even more universally understandable, thus capable of drawing readers of different epochs into the poetic world more easily.

as is understandable. On the other hand, no references to any newly-established *mac* of the new poetry tradition, if any, have been detected.

Following the above analysis, the poem can be regarded as a **good poem** (in terms of *shiyi*) lying closer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** (i.e. suffering from a low degree of **Type B unintelligibility**).

(M3) Wen Yiduo's 聞一多 "Xintiao" 心跳 (Throbbing of Heart, 1927⁶⁰²):

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined
T	心跳 (Throbbing of Heart): This, at this stage of reading, does not inform the reader too much of either the theme or information of the poetic world. (NE)
1	燈光漂白了 (light bleached): The light is whitening the walls, making them white as against the darkness outside in a silent night. This informs on the poetic world, as well as creates <u>rhetorical effect</u> . And white and dark could be <u>symbolic</u> of good and bad. (+ CE) (UE)
2	桌椅 (desk and chair): These, which are the close friends (<u>personification</u>) of a writer/poet/scholar, could offer a kind of comfort and intimacy within this house, in line with what is supposed to be in one's home. (+ CE) (UE) (FE)
3	古書 (ancient book): This represents a medium through which a reader indulges in the peace of the ancient world rather than recognises the plight of the real world. <u>Contrast</u> is made between the old and the present. (+ CE) (UE)
4	要好的 (In good relationship): This suggests that 茶杯 (teacup), a world in miniature, could be good enough for the poet for it is 貞女一般的潔白 (as white and clean as a virgin), i.e. it has never been corrupted/tainted by the external world/affairs. Again,

⁶⁰² See Sun and Yuan 1993, 152 for the dating and 151-152 for the poem.

	<p><u>contrast</u> is made through all the <u>similes</u> between the internal and external worlds.</p> <p>茶杯 (teacup):</p> <p>It is usually used to <u>represent</u> a world in miniature</p> <p>(+ CE) (UE)</p>
5	<p>小兒[...]在母親懷裡 (little son [...] in his mum's bosom):</p> <p>The baby and the mother, who should be the ones the poet most care for or in a way <u>symbolise</u> his psychological burdens, are both in peace and in harmony in this internal world.</p> <p>(+ CE) (UE) (FE)</p>
6	<p>大兒康健 (my elder son's good health):</p> <p>The elder son is also safe and sound in peace, <u>symbolising</u> another one of his psychological burdens.</p> <p>(+ CE) (UE)</p>
7	<p>神秘的靜夜 (mysterious silent night):</p> <p>How can this 靜夜 (silent night) be 神秘的 (mysterious), with all this peace? This use of <u>irony</u> simply suggests the opposite scenario.</p> <p>(+ CE) (UE)</p>
8	<p>喉嚨裡[...]感謝的/歌聲 (In my throat [...] a hymn of thankfulness):</p> <p>The hymn of thankfulness remains [在]喉嚨裡 (in throat), which means it is difficult to sing this hymn aloud, and there is probably hardly any thankfulness to express.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
9	<p>咒詛 (a curse):</p> <p>Instead the hymn turns into 咒詛 (a curse), which suggests that there is something to target this curse at. <u>Suspense</u> is made here. <u>Contrast</u> is made between 歌聲 (the hymn) and 咒詛 (a curse).</p> <p>(UE)</p>
10	<p>靜夜 (Silent night) and 賄賂 (bribe):</p> <p>賄賂 (bribe) is the gift bestowed to influence the recipient's conduct. In this case, 靜夜 (Silent night) (<u>personification</u>) offers the bribe probably in form of "silence".</p> <p>(UE)</p>
11	<p>這牆內尺方的和平 (this peace of a few square metres enclosed by walls):</p> <p>The poet clearly expresses that he will not accept this limited and confined peace, as characterised by the image of 這牆內尺方的和平 (this peace of a few square metres enclosed by walls) <u>symbolising</u> an enclosed world.</p> <p>(UE)</p>

12	<p>更遼闊的 (much wider and expansive):</p> <p>He insists that his is a real world which is 更遼闊的 (much wider and expansive), as <u>contrasted</u> with the enclosed world of limited and confined peace in L11.</p> <p>(+ CE) (UE)</p>
13	<p>四牆 (four walls):</p> <p>The walls, which are supposed to separate there from here, cannot fence this house from the reality of wars. The walls may further <u>symbolise</u> the psychological barrier of an individual between protecting his family and safeguarding the country.</p> <p>(UE)</p> <p>喧囂 (uproar):</p> <p>This is <u>contrasted</u> with 靜夜 (Silent night) in L10.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
14	<p>我的心跳 (throbbing of my heart):</p> <p>This, which <u>echoes</u> the title, suggests louder-than-ordinary heartbeat, a natural response to agitation of the individual's mind (use of <u>metonymy</u>).</p> <p>(FE) (UE)</p> <p>你 (you):</p> <p>Here, "silent night" is <u>personified</u> as someone who would like to bribe the poet, but cannot successfully persuade him to take the bribe.</p> <p>(+ CE) (UE)</p>
15	<p>口 (mouth):</p> <p>The poet declares that he'd rather die (by filling the mouth with sand and mud) than accept the bribe. The mouth <u>echoes</u> 歌聲 (a hymn [of thankfulness]) in L8 and 咒詛 (a curse) in L9. So the matter is escalated to more than silence and noise, but life and death.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
16	<p>個人的休戚 (personal weal and woe):</p> <p>If he accepts the bribe, he will be concerned with his own little world of private life, <u>symbolised</u> by 個人的休戚 (personal weal and woe).</p> <p>(UE)</p>
17	<p>讓這頭顱給田鼠掘洞 (leave this head for a vole to dig a hole):</p> <p>This vivid image is used to <u>symbolise</u> death. Again, the poet declares his unwillingness to accept the bribe. Even death is better than accepting the bribe.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
18	<p>屍蟲 (maggots):</p>

	<p>The <u>image</u> of 屍蟲 (maggots) vividly and graphically portrays the ugliness of imagined death.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
19	<p>酒 (Wine) and 詩 (poetry):</p> <p>These are considered the best companions of a poet (thus serving as <u>metonymy</u> for a poet's favoured way of living), a description to strengthen the goodness of peace say within a studio.</p> <p>(FE) (UE)</p>
20	<p>鐘擺 (pendulum):</p> <p>This <u>signifies</u> the time, a measure of life. Besides, all sounds, including that of 鐘擺 (pendulum), will still be in harmony with the silent night, only if the poet does not pay attention to the outside world.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
21	<p>呻吟 (moans and groans):</p> <p>The outside world, however, is filled with “noises”, such as 呻吟 (moans and groans), which <u>echo</u> 喧囂 (uproar) in L13, and are <u>contrasted</u> with 一片閒適 (repose) in L20, and <u>compared</u> to 歌聲 (the hymn) and 咒詛 (a curse) in L8 and L9. This tries to depict the external world.</p> <p>(+ CE)(FE)(UE)</p>
22	<p>寡婦孤兒 (widows and orphans):</p> <p>This suggests that many ordinary people have been victimised and killed by the war. This also draws <u>comparison</u> to the circumstances of his own wife and sons, who could finally fall victim to the cruelties of war.</p> <p>(+ CE)(FE)(UE)</p>
23	<p>戰壕裡的痙攣 (Spasms in trenches):</p> <p>This graphically suggests the plight suffered by soldiers (<u>metonymy</u>).</p> <p>(UE)</p> <p>瘋人咬着病榻 (madmen gripping their sickbeds):</p> <p>This <u>implies</u> one of the terrible outcomes of war: soldiers and/or innocent civilians being driven to craziness.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
24	<p>生活的磨子 (the mill of life):</p> <p>This suggests that survival could be so difficult during wartime.</p> <p>(+ CE)(FE)(UE)</p>
25	<p>幸福 (Bliss):</p> <p>Here, “silent night”, which has been personified above, is further characterised and <u>objectified</u> as 幸福 (Bliss), or rather pseudo-bliss (<u>irony</u>) in view of the poet's objection to taking the bribe, which echoes L10.</p>

	(+ CE)(FE)(UE)
26	<p>尺方的牆內 (this walled space of a few metres' size):</p> <p>The poet proclaims that he will not be confined in the small world of private life, as symbolised by 尺方的牆內 (this walled space of a few metres' size) (<u>metonymy</u>), which echoes L1 and L11-13.</p> <p>(+ CE)(FE)(UE)</p>
27	<p>炮聲，死神在咆哮 (the firing of cannons, the roaring of Death):</p> <p>This reinforces the adverse effect of “noises” of the external world, where Death (<u>personification</u>) is causing great havoc. Besides, it is a continuation of the use of “noises” to contrast with silence.</p> <p>(+ CE)(FE)(UE)</p>
28	<p>心跳 (throbbing of [...] heart):</p> <p>The poet can have bliss, if he remains silent in a “silent” night within the four walls of his room, but it is his conscience (which is equivalent to “soul”, or “良心” in Chinese) that cannot be silenced. So, 心 (heart) actually <u>symbolises</u> conscience.</p> <p>(FE)(UE)</p>

Analysis:

Relying on a number of simple, commonplace images/concepts of silent night, walls, throbbing, etc., this poem can be classified as a **meaningful** poem largely composed within the **OA** and interpretable through **internal contextualisation** (supported by instances of +CE in 15 lines) without relying much on references outside of a general reader's MiC.⁶⁰³ The many instances of +CE identified in this poem is indicative of Wen's effort in establishing a poetic world by enhancing the reader's understanding of that world, which, however, is just the necessary condition for producing *shiyi*.

From the above table, it is noted that “silence” can be a possible theme, and initial attempts to thematise the poem are given in the following table. Still, at this stage, it

⁶⁰³ According to Julia Lin, “one pervasive impulse” in Wen's poetry is “the profound awareness of reality and the preoccupation with the dualities in nature and art -- beauty and ugliness, life and death” (1972, 100). This is particularly true in the case of the poem under analysis here, where a number of ugly images are used to achieve artistic beauty. But even without referring to Lin, a reader can still enjoy the poem without any difficulty or loss of flavour. This is why the poem is classified as interpretable through internal contextualisation, and the above reference to Lin can be classified as information out of MiC.

is **Type A unintelligibility**, but not **Type B unintelligibility**, that can be ruled out.

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s) (possible theme: silence)
T	心跳 (Throbbing of Heart)	NE	theme-unfamiliarising
1	燈光漂白了 (light bleached)	+ CE UE	no theme
2	桌椅 (desk and chair)	+ CE UE FE	no theme
3	古書 (ancient book)	+ CE UE	no theme
4	要好的 (In good relationship)	+ CE UE	no theme
5	小兒[...]在母親懷裡 (little son [...] in his mum's bosom)	+ CE UE FE	no theme
6	大兒康健 (my elder son's good health)	+ CE UE	no theme
7	神秘的靜夜 (mysterious silent night)	+ CE UE	theme-familiarising theme-unfamiliarising
8	喉嚨裡[...]感謝的/歌聲 (In my throat [...] a hymn of thankfulness)	UE	theme-familiarising theme-unfamiliarising
9	咒詛 (a curse)	UE	theme-unfamiliarising
10	靜夜 (Silent night) and 賄賂 (bribe)	UE	theme-familiarising theme-unfamiliarising
11	這牆內尺方的和平 (this peace of a few square metres enclosed by walls)	UE	no theme
12	更遼闊的 (much wider and expansive)	+ CE UE	no theme
13	四牆 (four walls)	UE	no theme
	喧囂 (uproar)	UE	theme-unfamiliarising
14	我的心跳 (throbbing of my heart)	FE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
	你 (you)	+ CE	no theme

		UE	
15	口 (mouth)	UE	theme-unfamiliarising
16	個人的休戚 (personal weal and woe)	UE	no theme
17	讓這頭顱給田鼠掘洞 (leave this head for a vole to dig a hole)	UE	no theme
18	屍蟲 (maggots)	UE	no theme
19	酒 (Wine) and 詩 (poetry)	UE	no theme
20	鐘擺 (pendulum)	UE	theme-unfamiliarising
21	呻吟 (moans and groans)	+ CE FE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
22	寡婦孤兒 (widows and orphans)	+ CE FE UE	no theme
23	戰壕裡的痙攣 (Spasms in trenches)	UE	no theme
	瘋人咬着病榻 (madmen gripping their sickbeds)	UE	no theme
24	生活的磨子 (the mill of life)	+ CE FE UE	no theme
25	幸福 (Bliss)	+ CE FE UE	no theme
26	尺方的牆內 (this walled space of a few metres' size)	+ CE FE UE	no theme
27	炮聲，死神在咆哮 (the firing of cannons, the roaring of Death)	+ CE FE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
28	心跳 (throbbing of [...] heart)	FE UE	theme-unfamiliarising

The above table shows how the meaningful units can be used to thematise the poem. If “silence” is the theme, all those contributing to familiarity of this phenomenon of silence can be regarded as **theme-familiarising** (such as L7, L8, L10, etc.), while

those deviating from the phenomenon can be regarded as **theme-unfamiliarising** (such as L20, L21, L27, L28, etc.).⁶⁰⁴ On this understanding, it is suggested that the poet tries to investigate the inner nature of “silence” in the poem through comparing the silent night as perceived in his house with the outer real world full of noises, such as “the uproar of war” (L13), “the moans and groans from your neighbourhood” (L21) and “the firing of cannons” (L27), as well as the poet’s curse (L9) and throbbing of heart (L14 and L28) in response to noises from the outside real world. By asking almost the same question again on how to stop the throbbing (L14 and L28), the poet seems to suggest that this throbbing, symbolic of his agitated conscience, is or should be the natural response to the real world’s situation. Silence in the heart is analysed in the context of various noises, relying on (un)familiarisation, so as to reveal the underlying truth that real silence can only be achieved should all noises be quelled.

The poem can be regarded as a work of “**subtlety**” in that it is possible for a general reader to thematise it with a view to deriving *shiyi*. As seen from the above table, the poet has offered numerous clues to guide the reader into (re)constructing the poetic world. Since the clues, including all the simple images/concepts (such as silent night, walls and throbbing) employed, are all readily comprehensible, minimum processing efforts, and almost nil additional efforts, are required. This is possible only if the poem is composed taking into account the **OA** (or **oa**). Although a general reader of China around the 1920s should be more familiar with wartime cruelty than, say, one in the affluent Hong Kong or Shanghai of our time, the latter would encounter no difficulties in interpreting the poem. This represents Wen’s success in identifying the core **OA**, as well as in enriching the poem with **Chineseness**,⁶⁰⁵ of which *xin* 心 (heart) is one familiar constituent. As a traditional association long established in Chinese culture, *xin* 心 (heart) is symbolic of one’s *liangxin* 良心 (conscience), but the poet further applies the concept of “silence” on the heart, which effectively stimulates the reader to relate “throbbing” to an agitated heart. It is in this way that the poem is considered to have been composed taking into account the **oa**.

As for *shiyi*, by virtue of the clues to interpretation, a general reader is readily able to decipher the imagery of the silent night by observing the principle of relevance. The reader need not invest unnecessary effort in endlessly engaging himself in internal

⁶⁰⁴ If “noises” is taken as the theme, though, the opposite will be true.

⁶⁰⁵ See n.562, where Chineseness is identified with “the embodiment of the overlapping area of the cultural-literary micro/macro-context where the general reader can find anchorage of clues to meanings”.

contextualisation for what is more than a worthwhile interpretation. Still, he derives the “maximum significance from limited words”, thus enhancing his understanding of a fundamental component of humanity, i.e. conscience. *Shiyi* lies exactly in the reader’s awareness of this enhanced understanding, or truthfulness. This interpretation suggests that a theme need *not* necessarily be the existential concern of which a reader develops an enhanced understanding, or truthfulness. As in Wen’s case, the theme which allows successful thematisation is silence, but what is enhanced is conscience.⁶⁰⁶

As to **prosody**, the poem comprises 28 lines, and each line has 12 characters, excluding punctuation marks. Basically, this helps to achieve “structural beauty” the poet proposes.⁶⁰⁷ Structural beauty, however, should also be considered to provide the reader with a hint as to what to expect about the general rhythm of the lines that are to follow.⁶⁰⁸ This in itself, as well as regulated rhyming and metres, contributes to familiarity within the poem proper. However, given the above analysis on the derivation of *shiyi*, the effect of such structural beauty and rhyming, etc. on *shiyi* enhancement is not that significant.

Following the above analysis, Wen’s poem can be regarded as a **good poem** (in terms of *shiyi*) lying closer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** (i.e. still suffering from a low degree of **Type B unintelligibility**).

⁶⁰⁶ A way to reconcile the “impasse”, though apparently unsatisfactory, is to take the theme as, say, the silence of conscience.

⁶⁰⁷ Wen argues for three types of beauty in his 1926 essay “Shi de gelü” 詩的格律 (The form of poetry), namely the beauty of music (concerning the sound/syllable), the beauty of painting (concerning diction), and the beauty of construction [or “structural beauty” used in this thesis] (concerning the evenness of the stanza and the evenness of the line), and further contends that the possible inclusion of beauty of construction is one of the characteristics of new poetry. See Wen 1993, and esp. 141 for his remarks and 144 for the year of publication of the essay. N.B.: Wen remarks on 137 that *gelü* 格律 should be the right translation of “form”.

⁶⁰⁸ Despite subsequent criticisms regarding its worthiness, Wen’s idea on keeping “visual/structural beauty” is arguably “traditional” in the sense that his emphasis on keeping (more or less) a fixed number of characters in each line is in agreement with traditional prosody. According to Julia Lin, in a traditional Chinese poem, “it is the number of characters, not stresses, in each line that determines its meter” (1972, 8). Hence, it would seem that Wen’s insistence on “visual/structural beauty” may have a strong if implicit bearing on a poem’s melodic effect.

(M4) Xu Zhimo's 徐志摩 "Liangge yueliang" 兩個月亮 (Two Moons, 1931⁶⁰⁹):

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined
T	<p>兩個月亮 (two moons):</p> <p>This, which may be the theme, contrasts with the common knowledge of existence of only one physical moon, and may be variously allusive to Chineseness.⁶¹⁰</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
S1 1	<p>兩個月亮 (two moons):</p> <p>This <u>echoes</u> with the title, and enhances the chance of 兩個月亮 (two moons) being the theme.</p> <p>(+CE) (FE) (UE)</p>
2	<p>一般的樣，不同的相 (With the same face yet different looks):</p> <p>This introduces a new, <u>strange</u> idea of the two moons: they are similar and they are different at the same time.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
3	<p>在天上 (in the sky):</p> <p>This may <u>suggest</u> that the moon is (representing) something not actually attainable/achievable.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
4	<p>雀毛的衣裳 (cloak of feathers):</p> <p>This harbours a vague <u>connotation</u> like that of a flying bird, rather than relevance to Chineseness.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
5	<p>不吝惜她的恩情 (Not grudgingly are [her] favours given):</p> <p>This suggests the goodness and generosity of the moon (<u>personification</u>).</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>

⁶⁰⁹ In Xu's anthology of poetry entitled *Meng Hu Ji* 猛虎集 (Fierce Tiger Anthology), Shanghai: Xinyue Shudian 新月書店 (Crescent Moon Bookshop), 1931, as contained in Han 2001, 533-534. This poem of 34 lines as indicated (including 2 stanzas, the first comprising L1 to L18, and the second L19 to L34), is provided with a translation adapted from two renditions, in Acton and Ch'en 1936, 74-75 and Hsu 1964, 94-95 respectively.

⁶¹⁰ This may refer to the moon imagery as developed from Lia Bai onwards, or to "pointing one's finger to the moon" (which is, according to the Chinese tradition, construed as pointing to the truth), etc. Chineseness, of course, is part of the Micro-context of a general reader in a Chinese community.

6	<p>金銀 (gold and silver):</p> <p>This harbours a vague <u>connotation</u> of money.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
7	<p>琉璃 (glass-tiles)⁶¹¹:</p> <p>This harbours a vague <u>connotation</u>, just to complete the image of 故宮 (empty palace), and is not directly related to the possible theme of moon.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p> <p>故宮 (empty palace):</p> <p>This suggests the prosperity which is long gone, and serves to confirm the moon's generosity and/or sympathy.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
8	<p>三海 (Three Lakes)⁶¹²:</p> <p>This real location serves to concretise the poetic world, and relates to the prosperity of the place.</p> <p>(+CE)</p> <p>清麗 (limpid light):</p> <p>With the prosperity implied, Three Lakes serves to contrast with 清麗 [of the moon], which also means elegance.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
9	<p>跳 (jumps/leaps):</p> <p><u>Personification</u> of the moon does not create much unfamiliarising effect.</p> <p>(Weak UE)⁶¹³</p>
10	<p>藤蘿 (wisteria)⁶¹⁴:</p>

⁶¹¹ 琉璃 (lazurite as a material, or lapis lazuli as a kind of precious stone, as compared to roof tiles made of it) is considered one of the seven sacred stones in Buddhism. According to *The Amitābha Sūtra* (阿彌陀經) translated by Kumārajīva (鳩摩羅什), “[...] the Land of Ultimate Bliss has pools of the seven jewels, [...namely,] gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, mother-of-pearl, red pearls, and carnelian”. See Epstein 1970. This direction of relevance, however, is not justifiable given the cognitive effect that can be derivable from reading 琉璃 as some vague symbol of Buddhism or Buddhist idea within the context of the text of the poem. As such, such extra information can be classified as information out of MiC.

⁶¹² According to China Travel, 2011 and Shichahai.com, 2011, Shichahai 什剎海 is a famous scenic area situated in downtown Beijing that includes three lakes, namely, Qian Hai (Front Sea), Hou Hai (Back Sea) and Xi Hai (Western Sea).

⁶¹³ Whether the UE, or FE, is weak or not, however, does not affect the analysis, as it is likely that the meaningful unit concerned is still qualified for thematisation as will be shown in the second table.

⁶¹⁴ 藤蘿, or 紫藤, is described by Song Dynasty's Zhang Yi 張翊 in his *Hua Jing* 花經 (Book of

	<p>This doesn't offer any clue that is worth its inclusion into the reading, except for probably supporting the personification of the moon in the context, or describing the actual environment of the place at that time, which may remotely help concretising the poetic world.</p> <p>(Weak +CE) (Weak UE)</p>
11	<p>玲瓏/美 (delicate/beautiful):</p> <p><u>Personification</u> of the moon, nearly verging on clichés here, does not create much unfamiliarising effect.</p> <p>(+CE) (Weak UE)</p>
12	<p>魚兒 (fish):</p> <p>The fish image reminds readers of 沉魚落雁 (drowning the fish and downing the birds),⁶¹⁵ an expression to describe extreme beauty in classical Chinese (<u>Chineseness</u>). The relation to this expression is effective in strengthening the sense of beauty described, though it is a cliché rhetorically speaking.</p> <p>(Weak UE)</p>
13	<p>但[...]有一點子不好 (And yet [...] has a flaw):</p> <p>This creates <u>expectation</u> of something new in the following.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
14	<p>向瘦小裏耗 (to retreat into [herself]):</p> <p>This <u>personification</u> provides a vivid description of the waning of the moon.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
15	<p>星點 (stars):</p> <p>Stars are used to <u>contrast</u> with the moon. The brighter the stars, the dimmer the moon.</p> <p>(UE)</p>

Flowers) as follows: “The wisteria climbs up the plant [as its support] with its vines circling around, and tying knots, with the branches.” (紫藤緣木而上，條蔓纖結，與樹連理。) The legend has it that a couple of ill-fated lovers who committed suicide turned after death into a wisteria and a tree, with the former's vines climbing up by twining their stems round the tree as support. Wisteria is thus regarded as a plant that would live for love and die for lack of love. See Hudong.com, 2011. This, of course, can be classified as information out of MiC. It is noted that this reading, if absorbed into the poem, would create cognitive effect that is not worth the effort spent.

⁶¹⁵ This could be traced to one of the famous examples supposedly quoted by Zhuang Zi 莊子 (in “Qi Wu Lun” 齊物論 (the Identity of Contraries), Chapter II of *Zhuang Zi*) in presenting his argument for relativity, as translated as “[...] while men admire Mao Ch'iang [毛嬙] and Li Chi [麗姬], at the sight of whom fishes plunge deep down in the water, birds soar high in the air, [...] Yet who shall say which is the correct standard of beauty?” See Giles 1926, 44.

16	<p>圓臉 (round face):</p> <p>This harbours a weak <u>connotation</u> of a full moon <u>personified</u>. (UE)</p>
17	<p>照樣回來 (return as usual):</p> <p>This introduces some pattern observed by the moon as <u>personified</u>. (+CE) (UE)</p>
18	<p>相思 (longing [to see]):</p> <p>This is used to strengthen the effect of <u>personification</u> of the moon. (UE)</p> <p>有些難挨 (can be hard to bear):</p> <p>This seems to suggest that, as the full moon comes and goes as a matter of course, good fortune or anything that the moon may represent also comes and goes, and there is nothing that the poet can do about it.⁶¹⁶ (+CE)</p>
S2 19	<p>那個你看不見 (another moon you do not see):</p> <p>This introduces the second moon, which is, contrasted with the first one, not observable by the eye. (+CE)</p>
20	<p>雖則不提有多麼艷！ (Though her splendour is beyond praise!):</p> <p>This <u>echoes</u> the idea of “With the same face yet different looks” in L2 with <u>personification</u> of the second moon. (+CE) (FE) (UE)</p>
21	<p>醉渦的笑 (dimpled smile):</p> <p>This <u>personification</u> provides a vivid description of a woman, which however is not too appropriate for depicting any feature of the moon. (UE)</p>
22	<p>轉動 (turns around):</p> <p>This may suggest turning around the body as a gesture of refusal or leaving (<u>personification</u>). (UE)</p> <p>靈妙 (grace):</p> <p>This <u>personification</u> provides a vivid description of a woman, which however is not too appropriate for depicting any feature of the moon. (UE)</p>

⁶¹⁶ Fang Wanqin 方萬勤 considers that “相思有些難挨” actually suggests that the poet is passionately devoted to the ideal, but regrets its imperfection in the context of the world of reality (1993, 60).

23	<p>說慷慨她也從不讓人 (She is no less generous than the other moon):</p> <p>This <u>personification</u> also <u>echoes</u> the idea of “With the same face yet different looks” in L2.</p> <p>(FE) (UE)</p>
24	<p>我的園林 (my garden):</p> <p>This suggests that, contrasted with 三海 (Three Lakes) in L8, this private property of the poet receives nil attention from the public. The poet’s illumination by the moon is thus beyond others’ comprehension/knowledge. The secrecy of interaction and communication between the poet and the moon, appropriate to this second moon, is stressed here.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
25	<p>無邊的法力 (boundless magic power):</p> <p>This adumbrates the significant influence of the second moon on the poet’s mind and spirit.⁶¹⁷</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
26	<p>靈波 (waves of my spirit):</p> <p>靈 suggests the moon is (<u>representing</u>) something having a positive influence (向高裏提, literally meaning pulling upwards) on the poet’s spirit. 波, which is naturally subject to the moon’s gravitational pull, harbours a <u>connotation</u> of one’s emotion as in the common expression <i>xinchao</i> 心潮 (heart’s tides).</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
27	<p>銀濤 (silver waves):</p> <p>This <u>echoes</u> the connotation of <i>xinchao</i> 心潮 of the previous line, and seems to suggest that the poet’s emotion is at its climax.</p> <p>(+CE)(FE)(UE)</p>
28	<p>銀鐘 (silver bells):</p> <p>This makes a <u>comparison</u> regarding the sound of waves, and seems to suggest the beauty of this state of climax.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
29	<p>馬尾 (horsetail):</p> <p>This makes a <u>comparison</u> regarding the white foam of waves, and seems to suggest that even in the aftermath the poet’s emotions are still beautiful.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
30	<p>珠寶 (jewels):</p> <p>This makes another <u>comparison</u> regarding the white foam of waves bearing a</p>

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., 60.

	<p><u>connotation</u> of emotions. (UE)</p>
31	<p>一輪完美的明月 (A round perfect shining moon): This is like a statement asserting the perfection of the moon, but may serve as an <u>irony</u> if it is considered together with the L33 to L34. (+CE)(FE)(UE)</p>
32	<p>永不殘缺 (never [...] wane): This doesn't actually apply to the moon in nature, so this second moon may just be one in the poet's mind/imagination. 永不 further strengthens the irony of the previous line. (+CE)(FE)(UE)</p>
33	<p>閉上這一雙眼 (close these eyes): This closing of eyes, which is closely <u>associated</u> with closing one's eyes to the reality, enhances the idea that the second moon is not something real and observable by the eye. (+CE) (UE)</p>
34	<p>[祇要我閉上這一雙眼，] 她就婷婷的升上了天！([Whenever I close my eyes,] She will gracefully climb up the sky!): The couplet reinforces the idea that the ideal is achievable only in the poet's mind/imagination, while it is lost once the poet is back to reality.⁶¹⁸ <u>Personification</u> here is more appropriate considering the up-climbing movement of the moon. (+CE) (UE) 升上了天 (climb up the sky): This serves to provide a further twist as this second moon not observable by the eye is now perceived as climbing up the sky where it can normally be observed. This, however, also blurs the divide between the two moons (as “升上了天” implies her death), probably implicitly confessing that this second moon is also not achievable. (+CE) (UE)</p>
Date	<p>四月二日 (April 2): This was the 15th day of the second lunar month in 1931 according to the Chinese lunar calendar,⁶¹⁹ when there was a full moon. This, however,</p>

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ See <http://www.wannianli.net/> for on-line conversion of dates between the calendars. This, of course, requires a reader's extra processing effort in external contextualisation, and can be classified as information out of MiC.

	doesn't represent a relevant clue in itself. (NE)
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Analysis:

This is one of Xu Zhimo's most famous poems.⁶²⁰ Specifically, the poem is considered to have demonstrated the blending of romantic passions with a modernist *modus operandi* of writing.⁶²¹ Relying on some simple, commonplace images/concepts (e.g. moon, sky, feathers, gold and silver, empty palace, fish, stars, round face, dimpled smile, garden, magic power, silver waves, silver bells, etc.), this poem can be classified as a **meaningful** poem largely composed within the **OA** and interpretable through **internal contextualisation** (supported by instances of +CE in the title and 21 lines) without relying much on references outside of a general reader's **MiC**. The prevalence of meaningful units which produce +CE in this poem is indicative of Xu's effort in establishing a poetic world through enhancing the reader's understanding of that world, which, however, is just the necessary condition for producing *shiyi*.

From the above table, it is noted that "moon"/"two moons" can be regarded as a possible theme. Some images in the poems, like 雀毛的衣裳 (cloak of feathers) in L4, are employed rhetorically to suggest that the first moon is a manifestation of beauty in appearance, while other images, such as 滿地全是她的金銀 (Her gold and silver spread all over the earth) in L6 and 琉璃 (glass-tiles) in L7, to suggest this moon is also a manifestation of beauty in the heart.⁶²² On the other hand, however, L14-L16 and L18 suggest that the moon has its weakness, too, which is its

⁶²⁰ The poem is said to reveal the characteristics of poetry during the transition from the romantic school to the modernist school. See Fang 1993, 59, where the author also considers Xu to be one of the key figures in that transition in China. This is contrasted with Julia Lin's classification of Xu as one of the "romantic Formalist poets" along with Wen Yiduo and others. Lin's emphasis on "formalist", of course, is justified by her perceived focus of the Crescent Moon School on poetic form in general, as well as Xu's "experiments with various stanzaic forms". See Lin 1972, 75.

⁶²¹ Fang 1993, 59. Such characterisation, nevertheless, roughly agrees with Julia Lin's definition of her "Formalists' poetry", which, in addition to demonstrating a gradual mastery of *baihua*, "reveals [...] a more felicitous exploration of complex themes and imagery, and a romantic lyricism expressing themes of human significance" (1972, 75). N.B.: This, of course, can be classified as information out of MiC.

⁶²² Fang 1993, 59.

disappearance (being invisible) at times, albeit temporarily.⁶²³ All this amounts to testimony to the nature of the first moon: beauty and imperfection, or simply *imperfect beauty*.⁶²⁴ As for the second moon, “the moon in heart”,⁶²⁵ the poet has similarly used lots of images, such as 醉渦 (dimpled), 靈妙 (grace) and 可惜你望不到我的園林 (What a pity that you cannot see my garden),⁶²⁶ with a view to rendering concrete the otherwise abstract concept of internal and external beauty of this second moon.⁶²⁷ The vital difference between the two moons, however, is that the second moon is both beautiful and perfect, as it is 永不殘缺 ([its] fullness never wanes), and thus characterised by *perfect beauty*.⁶²⁸ Such analysis commonly found in recent literature, however, fails to account for the *shiyi* of the poem in detail. Besides, it basically ignores how the moon, itself concretised by other images in the poem, should be interpreted. It is noted, for instance, that moon in the Chinese literary-cultural tradition can be variously interpreted.⁶²⁹ However, a reader in fact *need not* be restricted by the above analysis for worthwhile interpretation of the poem. And an analysis conducted according to the proposed framework, which actually depicts how a general reader does in his comprehension, will now be given below.

Taking “moon/two moons” as the possible theme, initial attempts to thematise the poem can be made in the following table. Since the poem is considered meaningful, **Type A unintelligibility** can be ruled out, but it is still unsure at this stage if **Type B unintelligibility** can also be ruled out.

⁶²³ Ibid.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ It is “the moon in heart” because it is invisible to others, as no one can see 我的園林 (my garden), which is also in the poet’s heart. See Fang 1993, 60.

⁶²⁶ Fang 1993, 60.

⁶²⁷ From the above elaboration, it is noted that the images/expressions adopted in the poem can substantiate the description of the two moons with graphical vividness and concreteness producing rhetorical effect. In the table, other examples can also be identified, such as 故宮 (empty palace, L7), 向瘦小裏耗 (to retreat into [herself], L14), 星點 (stars, L15), 珠寶 (jewels, L30), 一輪完美的明月 (A round perfect shining moon, L31), 永不殘缺 (never [...] wane, L32), and 祇要我閉上這一雙眼，她就婷婷的升上了天 (Whenever I close my eyes, She will gracefully climb up the sky, L33-L34).

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ To be elaborated shortly.

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s)
T	兩個月亮 (two moons)	+CE UE	<u>possible theme</u> : moon/two moons
S1 1	兩個月亮 (two moons)	+CE FE UE	theme-familiarising
2	一般的樣，不同的相 (With the same face yet different looks)	UE	theme-familiarising
3	在天上 (in the sky)	+CE UE	theme-familiarising
4	雀毛的衣裳 (cloak of feathers)	UE	theme-unfamiliarising
5	不吝惜她的恩情 (Not grudgingly are [her] favours given)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
6	金銀 (gold and silver)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
7	琉璃 (glass-tiles)	+CE UE	no theme
	故宮 (empty palace)	+CE UE	no theme
8	三海 (Three Lakes)	CE	no theme
	清麗 (limpid light)	UE	no theme
9	跳 (jumps/leaps)	Weak UE	theme-unfamiliarising
10	藤蘿 (wisteria)	Weak +CE Weak UE	no theme
11	玲瓏/美 (delicate/beautiful)	+CE Weak UE	theme-familiarising
12	魚兒 (fish)	Weak UE	no theme
13	但[...]有一點子不好 (And yet [...] has a flaw)	+CE UE	no theme

14	向瘦小裏耗 (to retreat into [herself])	UE	theme-unfamiliarising
15	星點 (stars)	UE	theme-unfamiliarising
16	圓臉 (round face)	UE	theme-unfamiliarising
17	照樣回來 (return as usual)	+CE UE	theme-familiarising
18	相思 (longing [to see])	UE	no theme
	有些難挨 (can be hard to bear)	+CE	no theme
S2 19	那個你看不見 (another moon you do not see)	+CE	theme-unfamiliarising
20	雖則不提有多麼艷！(Though her splendour is beyond praise!)	+CE FE UE	theme-familiarising
21	醉渦的笑 (dimpled smile)	UE	theme-unfamiliarising
22	轉動 (turns around)	UE	theme-unfamiliarising
	靈妙 (grace)	UE	theme-unfamiliarising
23	說慷慨她也從不讓人 (She is no less generous than the other moon)	FE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
24	我的園林 (my garden)	+CE UE	no theme
25	無邊的法力 (boundless magic power)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
26	靈波 (waves of my spirit)	+CE UE	no theme
27	銀濤 (silver waves)	+CE FE UE	no theme
28	銀鐘 (silver bells)	UE	no theme
29	馬尾 (horsetail)	UE	no theme
30	珠寶 (jewels)	UE	no theme
31	一輪完美的明月(A round perfect shining moon)	+CE FE	theme-unfamiliarising

		UE	
32	永不殘缺 (never [...] wane)	+CE FE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
33	閉上這一雙眼 (close these eyes)	+CE UE	no theme
34	[祇要我閉上這一雙眼，] 她就婷婷的升上了天！ ([Whenever I close my eyes,] She will gracefully climb up the sky!)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
	升上了天(climb up the sky)	+CE UE	theme-familiarising theme-unfamiliarising
Date	四月二日(April 2)	NE	no theme

The above table shows how the meaningful units can be used to thematise the poem. If “moon” or “two moons” is considered the theme, all those contributing to familiarity of this moon concept (here, for simplicity, incorporating both “moon” and “two moons”) can be regarded as theme-familiarising (such as L1-L3, L11, L20, etc.), while those deviating from the concept can be regarded as theme-unfamiliarising (such as L4-L6, L9, L14-L16, L19, L21-L23, etc.). On this understanding, it is suggested that the poet tries to investigate, based on the (un)familiarisation devices in terms of the meaningful units, the inner nature of the moon concept in the poem through contrasting the first moon with the second moon.⁶³⁰

However, as a traditional association long established in Chinese culture (constituting **Chineseness**), *yue* 月 (moon) is seldom used as a concept worthy of meditation in itself. It can, for instance, be used to symbolise hometown nostalgia (as in Li Bai’s “Jing ye si”), family reunion (as in Su Dongpo’s 蘇東坡 most famous *ci* poem written to the melody of *Shui Diao Ge Tou* 水調歌頭⁶³¹), etc. In practice, therefore,

⁶³⁰ This is basically in line with what is suggested in the literature, that Xu tries to examine the inner nature of ideal through comparing the real moon to an imaginary moon in this poem. Julia Lin points out that the moon is one of Xu’s “primary symbols of beauty, aspiration, and permanence” (1972, 110). Moreover, according to Wang Tieli 王鐵力, the “moon” image appears in the work of almost all the poets of the Crescent Moon School, reflecting the characteristic of the poets in inheriting the tradition and exhibiting the modern; and among the poets Xu is most successful artistically (2009, 79).

⁶³¹ Su’s *ci* poem, written for his younger brother on the day of the Mid-Autumn Festival in the year of Bing Chen 丙辰 (i.e. 1076 C.E.), reads as follows: 明月幾時有[...]人有悲歡離合，月有陰晴圓缺，

it is reasonable to assume that Xu, following the cultural-literary tradition (or having internalised constituents in the **mac** relevant to the moon imagery), also tries to symbolise the real theme by the moon. This real theme can be variously attributed, such as to love, friendship, etc., but if “ideal” is taken as the real theme, then others, including love and friendship, can be duly incorporated. Accordingly, it is suggested that Xu’s (un)familiarisation is done through the comparison of two moons, both actually manifestations of the same moon of ideal, with ideal itself. The two moons are first, along the lines of the poem, (un)familiarised, through various images employed for concretisation. (For instance, the first moon is familiarised by “delicate/beautiful” in L11 and unfamiliarised by “gold and silver” in L6, and the second moon is familiarised by “climb up the sky” in L34 and unfamiliarised by “boundless magic power” in L25.) Then, through the comparison of the two manifestations, by having one of them (usually the first moon) as the basis of (un)familiarity, (un)familiarisation can take place with reference to the other. (For instance, the first moon as familiarised by “in the sky” in L3 can be compared with the second moon as (un)familiarised by “climb up the sky” in L34.) And at last, ideal is (un)familiarised, or concretised, in the poem during the (un)familiarisation process of the moon through the comparison of the moon with the ideal. (This can be done, for instance, by filling “ideal” in the place of “moon” in the poem.) The moon in nature is full all the time, if not for some other natural phenomena such as eclipse, bad weather and rotation of the earth, which are unavoidable. And that is why the first moon is far from perfect. However, the moon in fact relies on the sun for it only reflects.⁶³² As such, a perfect moon is actually non-existent, and so is ideal, except when it is realised in the mind, as in the case of the second moon. Under the proposed framework, all these deliberations are said to be conveyed to the general reader by the moon image, and through its relevance to the **mac**, or **mic** if the relevant constituents have been internalised, and its interaction/interplay with all other images in the poem, which are considered less relevant, and primarily supportive.⁶³³

此事古難全。但願人長久，千里共嬋娟。(When did the bright moon first appear? [...] Men have sorrow and joy, they part and meet again; The moon may be bright or dim, she may wax or wane. There has been nothing perfect since olden days. So let us wish that man live as long as he can! Though miles apart, we’ll share the beauty she displays.) For the dating, Chinese text and English translation, see Xu Yuanchong 2007, 104-105. The moon in Xu’s poem can also be a clue pointing to such other constituents of Chineseness as the Buddhist moon or the Neo-Confucianist moon concerned with truth(-seeking).

⁶³² This idea is not made explicit in the poem, but is suggested in a prose by Xu Zhimo, entitled “Zhongqiu Yue” 中秋月 (The Autumn Moon). See Wang Tieli 2009, 79.

⁶³³ For Su Dongpo’s *ci* poem, the different shapes of the moon are compared to separations and

The poem can be regarded as a work of “**subtlety**” in that, with all the FE/CE produced by the meaningful units in the first table, the poem’s openness to contextualisation is confirmed. This means it is also likely for a general reader to thematise the meaningful units with a view to deriving *shiyi*.

Overall speaking, as seen from the above (second) table, the poet has offered numerous clues to guide the reader into (re)constructing the poetic world. Since the clues employed, including all the simple images/concepts (such as 金銀 (gold and silver) in L6, 故宮 (empty palace) in L7, 圓臉 (round face) in L16, 相思 (longing) in L18, etc.), are all readily comprehensible, minimum processing efforts, and almost nil additional efforts, are required for external contextualisation. This is possible only if the poem is composed taking into account the **OA**. It is surmised that a general reader of China around the 1930s should be more familiar with the places in the poem than, say, one in Hong Kong of our time, but the latter would see no difficulties in interpreting the poem in general. This represents Xu’s basic success in identifying the core **OA**. In addition, the use of such images as 藤蘿 (wisteria) in L10 and 魚兒 (fish) [which reminds a general of 沉魚落雁 (drowning the fish and downing the birds)] in L12, as well as the moon imagery, also highlights his dexterity in enriching the poem with **Chineseness**.⁶³⁴ However, the *shiyi* as derived from our reading is not too reliant on such use of constituents in the **mac/mic**, especially when the moon imagery in the poem can still be constructed even without reference to the tradition (as Xu’s moon imagery itself is already strong enough for *shiyi* derivation). As such, it can be suggested that such images borrowed from the **mac** (and hence also **mic**) play a more vital role in strengthening of familiarity, rather than in derivation of *shiyi*.

As for derivation of *shiyi*, by virtue of the clues identified, a general reader is basically able to decipher the imagery of the moon (incorporating “two moons”) by observing the principle of relevance. This means the reader is not required to invest unnecessary effort in endlessly engaging himself in internal contextualisation for what is more than a worthwhile interpretation. Still, he derives the “maximum significance from limited words”, thus enhancing his understanding of a fundamental component of humanity, i.e. ideal. The *shiyi* lies exactly in the reader’s awareness of

meetings of humans, but the moon(light) is considered something to treasure, look upon and wait for. This demonstrates the dual nature of Su’s moon, which can (though *need not*) be readily borrowed and applied with modifications in the general reader’s interpretation of Xu Zhimo’s poem.

⁶³⁴ See n.614 for 藤蘿 (wisteria), n.615 for 魚兒 (fish) and n.610 for the moon imagery.

this enhanced understanding, or truthfulness. Thus, in this poem, the theme is, just like in Wen Yiduo's "Xintiao", different from that whose understanding has been enhanced. This calls for adjustment to the revised hypothesis so as to accommodate this use of theme to the benefit of another object of knowledge/truthfulness enhancement.

As to **prosody**, the poem comprises 34 lines, each of which has 8-10 characters, excluding punctuation marks.⁶³⁵ This helps to achieve the structural beauty that the Crescent Society, in which Xu was actively involved, promotes in general. Structural beauty, however, should be considered to be providing the reader with a hint as to what to expect about the general rhythm of the lines that are to be read. This simplistic strategy contributes to familiarity in terms of melodic effect, and the varied lengths of the lines avoid the creation of an unnecessary, monotonous perception, which is especially important as the poem runs quite long. Melodic effect (or the lack of it), however, is not adequate in itself to create *shiyi*, though it is arguably possible to result in strengthening of +CE through reinforcing the message/meaning of the line/stanza concerned by means of the (un)familiarity it can contribute to. However, given the above analysis on the derivation of *shiyi*, the effect of such structural beauty and rhyming, etc. on *shiyi* enhancement is far from significant.

Following the above analysis, the poem can be regarded as a **good poem** (in terms of *shiyi*) lying nearer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** (i.e. still suffering from a certain degree of **Type B unintelligibility**).

⁶³⁵ There are three stanzas in the poem, the first containing L1-L2, the second L3-L18, and the third L19-L34. L31 and L32 are indented. See Xu Zhimo 1983, 354-357.

(M5) Dai Wangshu's 戴望舒 "Woyong cansun de shouzhang" 我用殘損的手掌
(With My Injured Hand, 1942⁶³⁶)⁶³⁷:

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined
T	It is doubtful at this stage if anything is suggested in this title as the theme. (+CE)
1	殘損 (injured): This relates to how much the poet was injured, probably in the prison during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong in 1942. ⁶³⁸ Or it can be associated to anything bad, or to the poet by taking it as used rhetorically as some symbol or <u>metonymy</u> . (+CE) (UE)
2	摸索 (grope): This indicates slow motion, <u>echoing</u> the injured condition of the hand mentioned in the previous line. (+CE) (FE) 廣大的土地 (expansive earth): This <u>contrasts</u> the small hand with the expansive land, highlighting the interaction between the two. (+CE) (UE)
3	一角 (corner): This reminds the reader of a corner of a map (<u>metonymy</u>), which can be

⁶³⁶ See Shi and Ying 1987, 68-69 for the Chinese original, and 312 for the dating. On 312, it is suggested that the poem was composed on 3 July 1942 after Dai was released from prison in spring that year when Hong Kong was under Japanese occupation. Wang Wenbin 王文彬, however, suggests that the poem was composed in 1946, even though it was dated earlier to 1942 by the poet himself. See Wang Wenbin 2000 for an elaboration of Wang's reasons for asserting Dai's backdating, including, inter alia, his discovery of "Duan bian" 斷篇 (Fragments), Dai's another poem composed during the period of 1941-46, which Wang considers to be the prototype of "Woyong cansun de shouzhang" (on 83-84). Notwithstanding this, the difference in dating of the poem should not have any significant effect on the analysis here. This piece of information, of course, can be classified as information out of MiC.

⁶³⁷ For a rendition of this poem, see Gregory B. Lee's translation in Lau and Goldblatt 2007, 512.

⁶³⁸ See Lu and Liu 1990, 266-267. This, however, should not prevent a general reader from associating this injured hand to anything bad.

	<p>touched by a hand. (+CE) (UE) 灰燼 (ashes): This <u>implies</u> the flames of war have burned everything there. (+CE) (UE)</p>
4	<p>血和泥 (blood and mud): This <u>implies</u> the war has cost many lives. (+CE) (UE)</p>
5	<p>該是 (must be): This <u>implies</u> that the place is in ruins and almost beyond recognition. (+CE) (UE)</p>
6	<p>春天 (Spring): This spring, its first appearance in the poem, harbours a vague <u>connotation</u> of a good season of the year. This may be a possible theme, or an imagery representing a theme. (+CE) (FE) (UE)</p>
7	<p>柳 (willow): This relates to the traditional symbol of leaving or parting company (<u>Chineseness</u>),⁶³⁹ and may suggest some parting experience earlier. (+CE) (UE)</p>
8	<p>微涼 (coolness): This is <u>contrasted</u> with the flames of war. (+CE) (UE)</p>
9	<p>長白山 (Changbai Shan): This suggests that the war has affected almost everywhere of the country, even the coldest parts as <u>symbolised</u>. (+CE) (UE)</p>
10	<p>黃河 (Yellow River): This, again, suggests that the war has affected almost everywhere of the country. (+CE) (UE)</p>
11	<p>江南 (south of the Yangtze):</p>

⁶³⁹ See Liu 1962, 11, where James Liu considers willow as an example of what he refers to as “notional associations”, which have their effect of association “aroused by the object the word denotes [...]”, and which may be “due to some common belief or custom, or [...] some legend or myth”. He also explains that the willow association can be traced to Tang dynasty, when “it was a custom to break a willow twig and present it to a departing friend”.

	<p>This suggests that the war has affected almost everywhere of the country, north or south.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p> <p>禾草 (shoots):</p> <p>This is <u>contrasted</u> with 蓬蒿 (reeds) in L12.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
12	<p>蓬蒿 (reeds):</p> <p>This is <u>contrasted</u> with 禾草 (shoots) in L11 to show a deterioration of condition.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
13	<p>嶺南 (Lingnan):</p> <p>This suggests that the war has affected almost everywhere of the country.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
14	<p>南海 (South China Sea):</p> <p>Same as analysis for L13.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
15	<p>江山 (rivers and mountains):</p> <p>This, which generally <u>symbolises</u> the country, suggests the same as L13-14.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
16	<p>血和灰 (blood and ashes) / 陰暗 (gloom):</p> <p>These <u>signify</u> all the disastrous and dreadful sufferings resulting from the war.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
17	<p>遼遠的一角依然完整 (distant corner which is still whole):</p> <p>This relates to the hope of winning the war, i.e. the rear base where the war has not affected.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
18	<p>春 (spring/flourishing):</p> <p>This second appearance of spring, which more or less confirms its possible status as the theme, suggests the goodness still existing in the rear base.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
19	<p>輕撫 (touch lightly):</p> <p>This reflects how much the poet treasures that particular corner.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
20	<p>戀人的柔髮 (lover's soft hair) and 嬰孩手中乳 (a breast in a baby's hands):</p> <p>These harbour a <u>connotation</u> to love, and are considered signals of growth.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
21	<p>全部的力量 (all my strength):</p>

	This suggests how eagerly the poet is willing to sacrifice for the country. (+CE) (UE)
22	寄與愛和一切希望 (place love and all my hope there): This reinforces how much the poet treasures that corner. (+CE) (UE)
23	春 (spring): This spring, its third appearance in the poem, reinforces the goodness of the season, and serves as a prelude to the next line describing rebirth. It is quite certain that spring is a possible theme of the poem. (+CE) (UE)
24	蘇生 (rebirth): This <u>echoes</u> the return or spread of spring mentioned in L23. This may suggest that spring is the symbol of the real theme, rebirth. (+CE) (UE)
25	牲口 (animals): This indicates how poor life is like under the rule of Japanese invaders. (+CE) (UE)
26	螻蟻 (Ants): Same as analysis for L25. (+CE) (UE)

Analysis:

This poem is considered one of Dai Wangshu's finest works manifesting his poetical creativity at its peak through a new lyrical style established by a synthesis of qualities of realism and surrealism.⁶⁴⁰ Numerous images and expressions have been used to depict vividly the chaotic circumstances into which the country was thrown. *Cansun* 殘損 (injured), for instance, is used to concretise the pain inflicted upon the poet's body and the hatred for the cruelty of Japanese soldiers, as well as the compassion for the suffering experienced by the Chinese people as a whole [resulting from Japanese invasion] and the poet's deep thought on the ill fate of his home country.⁶⁴¹ His strong concern for China is evident in L1-L2, where the hand is said to grope around

⁶⁴⁰ Wang Wenbin 2000, 83. Besides, Xu Rui 徐蕊, among others, also considers this poem to be successful and [its attractiveness] long-lasting, as well as integrating techniques of realism and surrealism. See Xu Rui 2007, 61 and 62. This, of course, can be classified as information out of MiC.

⁶⁴¹ Lu and Liu 1990, 267.

the land, despite its obvious injury, and “grope” is used to reflect the severity of the harm suffered by the poet, whose injured body must have prevented him from quick movement.⁶⁴² So a difficult spiritual journey begins with the hand moving around, from this side to that side of the occupied land, seeing and touching the ruined places and locations such as his home village, Changbai Shan, Yellow River, south of the Yangtze, Lingnan and South China Sea, where everything is in ashes, blood and mud.⁶⁴³ This description seems to be a picture of the country under occupation,⁶⁴⁴ and it is in the beginning of the second half of the poem (L17) that the poet shifts to passionately eulogising the “distant corner” (including Chongqing 重慶 and Yan’an 延安) which is still “whole” and where the poet and the Chinese people anchor their hope.⁶⁴⁵ Going through the poem, it is noted that employing a number of simple, commonplace images/concepts (such as 殘損的手掌 (injured hand) in L1, 廣大的土地 (vast land) in L2, 血和泥 (blood and mud) in L4, 家鄉 (old home) in L5, 春天 (spring) in L6 and many others), this poem can be classified as a **meaningful** poem composed within the **OA** and interpretable through **internal contextualisation** (supported by instances of +CE in the title and all of 26 lines) without depending much on references outside of a general reader’s **MiC**. The prevalence of meaningful units which produce +CE in this poem is indicative of Dai’s effort in forming a poetic world by enhancing the reader’s understanding of that world, which, as suggested in the analysis of other poems earlier, is just the necessary condition for producing *shiyi*.

From the above table, it is noted that “spring” and “rebirth” can be regarded as possible themes. The three appearances of *chun* 春 (spring), respectively in L6,

⁶⁴² Ibid., 268.

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid., 268-269. It is regarded by the authors as also demonstrating a synthesis of *qing* 情 (emotion) and *jing* 景 (scene). The authors, however, fall short of explicating how such a synthesis is achieved in the poem, except on 269 where, after quoting Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (“情景名為二，而實不可離。神於詩者，妙合無垠。巧者則有情中景，景中情。” [see n.244 for a translation]), it is asserted that instead of directly expressing his emotions, the poet has such emotions embraced in the poem, so that the meanings as contained in physical objects would represent meanings the poet would like to express. N.B.: This synthesis is, however, used to support the formulation of a poetic world as suggested in Chapter 2/3. In short, the meaningful units for constructing the poetic world are endowed with openness to contextualisation, and subject to appropriate thematisation, these “open” units could be expected to produce *shiyi*. Thus, it is through the revised hypothesis that how artistic value is produced can be satisfactorily accounted for.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., 269-270.

L18 and L23, strongly indicate its significance in the poem, and 蘇生 (rebirth) in L24, which precedes the last two lines as a concluding remark on the future of China, also justifies its being considered a possible theme of the poem.

Since the poem is considered meaningful, **Type A unintelligibility** can be ruled out, but it is still unsure at this stage if **Type B unintelligibility** can also be ruled out. Taking “spring/rebirth” as the possible theme, initial attempts to thematise the poem can be made in the following table.

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s) <u>possible theme</u> : spring/rebirth
1	殘損 (injured)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
2	摸索 (grope)	+CE FE	no theme
	廣大的土地 (expansive earth)	+CE UE	no theme
3	一角 (corner)	+CE UE	no theme
	灰燼 (ashes)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
4	血和泥 (blood and mud)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
5	該是 (must be)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
6	春天 (Spring)	+CE FE UE	theme-familiarising
7	柳 (willow)	+CE UE	no theme
8	微涼 (coolness)	+CE UE	no theme
9	長白山 (Changbai Shan)	+CE UE	no theme
10	黃河 (Yellow River)	+CE	no theme

		UE	
11	江南 (south of the Yangtze)	+CE UE	no theme
	禾草 (shoots)	+CE UE	no theme
12	蓬蒿 (reeds)	+CE UE	no theme
13	嶺南 (Lingnan)	+CE UE	no theme
14	南海 (South China Sea)	+CE UE	no theme
15	江山 (rivers and mountains)	+CE UE	theme-familiarising
16	血和灰 (blood and ashes)/陰暗 (gloom)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
17	遼遠的一角依然完整 (distant corner which is still whole)	+CE UE	theme-familiarising
18	春 (spring/flourishing)	+CE UE	theme-familiarising
19	輕撫 (touch lightly) (+ CE) (UE)	+CE UE	no theme
20	戀人的柔髮 (lover's soft hair) and 嬰孩手中乳 (a breast in a baby's hands)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
21	全部的力量 (all my strength)	+CE UE	no theme
22	寄與愛和一切希望 (place love and all my hope there)	+CE UE	theme-familiarising
23	春 (spring)	+CE UE	theme-familiarising
24	蘇生 (rebirth)	+CE UE	theme-familiarising
25	牲口 (animals)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising

26	螻蟻 (Ants)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
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The above table shows how the poet tries to investigate, based on the (un)familiarisation devices, as well as the meaningful units, the inner nature of the “spring” or “rebirth” concept: all those contributing to familiarity of this “spring” or “rebirth” concept can be regarded as theme-familiarising (such as L6, L15, L17-L18, etc.), while those deviating from the concept can be regarded as theme-unfamiliarising (such as L1, L3-L5, L16, etc.). For instance, 血和灰 (blood and ashes)/陰暗 (gloom) in L16 is theme-unfamiliarising, because it gives the detailed description of the dark side of death, cruelty, etc., which actually suggests how significant a rebirth could mean against all these unfavourable conditions.

The poem, it is noted, uses many images/expressions to concretise/familiarise the theme of rebirth of China from injuries of war by means of the spring imagery. Primarily, the three appearances of *chun* 春 (spring), a possible theme of the poem, respectively in L6, L18 and L23, represent a process which can be compared to the return of seasons. Hence, it is suggested that *chun* is used to symbolise the real theme of rebirth. Specifically, the first *chun* represents the good old time in the old home, where there was peace. The second *chun* represents the reduced spring, still found in that particular corner unaffected by the flames of war, that is developing. The third *chun* represents the spring which is to return to the whole of China. Thus, with the three appearances of *chun*, the theme of rebirth of China is concretised, while spring is unfamiliarised⁶⁴⁶ to signify three actual springs under different circumstances.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁶ Spring, as a possible theme or rather the *proxy* of the real theme, is not a very abstract concept, and neither is rebirth, the identified real theme. As such, it is mostly the case that spring, or rebirth, is unfamiliarised rather than familiarised. But among the two themes, spring is more familiar, and less abstract, a concept than rebirth. Hence, in symbolising rebirth, spring can be regarded as being used to familiarise rebirth. Whether it is familiarisation or unfamiliarisation, therefore, depends on the **relative familiarity** of the themes concerned as perceived by the reader.

⁶⁴⁷ By contrast, other images/expressions in the poem, including 微涼 (coolness) in L8, 戀人的柔髮 (lover's soft hair) and 嬰孩手中乳 (a breast in a baby's hands) in L20 and 蘇生 (rebirth) in L24 (so rebirth and spring can be said to be (un)familiarising each other), are deployed to support the spring imagery. Besides, *cansun de shouzhang* 殘損的手掌 (injured hand) is used to concretise all injuries inflicted on the country and the people, while the hand is unfamiliarised through its rather surrealist groping of the vast land. And, accordingly, it is noted that through this process of (un)familiarisation, *qing* and *jing* are effectively synthesised, with *qing* representing the theme or abstract concept in our

The poem can be regarded as a work of “**subtlety**”, in the sense that, with all the FE/CE produced by the meaningful units in the first table, the poem’s **openness to contextualisation** is confirmed. This means that the meaningful units are also likely to allow thematisation by a general reader with a view to deriving *shiyi*. It is noted, however, that many units in the poem as identified remain thematisation-neutral (as indicated by “no theme” in the second table). This is probably due to the fact that these units, such as 柳 (willow) in L7, 微涼 (coolness) in L8, 長白山 (Changbai Shan) in L9 and 黃河 (Yellow River) in L10,⁶⁴⁸ mainly serve to provide +CE for constructing the poetic world. Even though they do not participate directly in thematisation, they have provided a solid background for thematisation to occur.

Overall speaking, as seen from the two tables above, the poet has offered many clues to guide the reader into (re)constructing the poetic world. Since the clues, including all the simple images/concepts (such as 殘損的手掌 (injured hand) in L1, 廣大的土地 (vast land) in L2, 血和泥 (blood and mud) in L4, 家鄉 (old home) in L5, 春天 (spring) in L6 and many others, as mentioned earlier) employed, are all readily comprehensible, almost nil additional efforts are required for external contextualisation. This is possible, simply because the poem was composed taking into account the **OA**. It is surmised that even though a general reader in China around the time of composition should be more familiar with the background of the poem, a general reader in Hong Kong of our time would face with no difficulties in interpreting the poem in general. This represents Dai’s success in identifying the core **OA**. It is also noted that as a Chineseness imagery *liu* 柳 in L7 can be regarded as reference to the **mac**, which highlights the poet’s skills in enriching the poem with **Chineseness**.

As for *shiyi*, by virtue of the clues identified, a general reader is basically able to decipher the imagery of the *chun* (proxy of “rebirth”) by observing the principle of relevance. This means the reader is not required to invest unnecessary effort in endlessly engaging himself in internal contextualisation for what is more than a worthwhile interpretation. Still, he is able to maximise significance from limited

mind and *jing* representing the images of external objects. This poem is thus a good demonstration of how the synthesis of *qing* and *jing* is achieved in terms of (un)familiarisation.

⁶⁴⁸ It can be argued that these few units could be theme-familiarising especially for “spring”, but their effect is still too weak to justify this label. If too much effort is to be invested in making a better sense of them in terms of theme-familiarising effect, it would be against the principle of optimal relevance.

words, thereby enhancing his understanding of a significant aspect of humanity, i.e. rebirth (of a nation). Such enhanced understanding is derived through concretisation of rebirth as a theme through (un)familiarisation, as well as the (un)familiarisation of primarily the *chun* imagery as mentioned above. *Shiyi* lies exactly in the reader's awareness of this enhanced understanding. (But it is found that the *shiyi* derived from the poem is not too much dependent on *liu* 柳 in L7 as a Chineseness imagery.)

As to **prosody**, the poem comprises 26 lines, each of which has 9-15 characters (more varied as compared to, say, 8-10 characters in Xu Zhimo's "Liangge yueliang"), excluding punctuation marks. The varied lengths of the lines definitely help to avoid the creation of a monotonous rhythm in a poem which runs a bit long. **Melodic effect** (e.g. the weak resonance created by the repetition of "spring"), however, is not adequate in itself to directly create *shiyi*, or even subtlety (i.e. a measure of possible realisation of *shiyi* in terms of FE/UE produced by meaningful units through contextualisation), though it is arguably possible to result in strengthening of +CE through reinforcing the message/meaning of the line/stanza concerned by means of the (un)familiarity it can contribute to. However, given the above analysis on the derivation of *shiyi*, the effect of such structural design, melodic effect, etc. on *shiyi* enhancement is nothing more than significant.

Following the above analysis, the poem can be regarded as a **good poem** (in terms of *shiyi*) lying nearer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** (i.e. still suffering from a certain degree of **Type B unintelligibility**).

(M6) Yu Guangzhong's 余光中 "Xiang chou" 鄉愁 (Nostalgia, 1972⁶⁴⁹):

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined
T	This may be the theme. (+CE)
S1 1	小時候 (When I was young): This introduces a time frame to the poem. (+CE)
2	郵票 (stamp):

⁶⁴⁹ The translation with its title is the poet's as contained in Lau and Goldblatt 2007, 536.

	<p>A stamp, which <u>signifies</u> the letter it enables to carry the message across the distance between two parties, is seemingly used to concretise nostalgia by 是 (was).</p> <p>小小的 (tiny, tiny):</p> <p>This tininess <u>contrasts</u> with the supposedly deep sense of nostalgia.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
3	<p>我在這頭 (Me on this side):</p> <p>This, together with L4, concretises the distance between the two parties.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
4	<p>母親在那頭 (Mother on the other side):</p> <p>This, together with L3, concretises the distance between the two parties.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
S2 5	<p>長大後 (When I grew up):</p> <p>This introduces a time frame to the poem.</p> <p>(+CE)</p>
6	<p>船票 (boat ticket):</p> <p>A boat ticket, which enables the holder to travel across the distance between two parties, is seemingly used to concretise nostalgia by 是 (was).</p> <p>窄窄的 (narrow):</p> <p>This narrowness <u>contrasts</u> with the supposedly deep sense of nostalgia.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
7	<p>我在這頭 (Me on this side):</p> <p>This, together with L8, concretises the distance between the two parties.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
8	<p>新娘在那頭 (My bride on the other side):</p> <p>This, together with L7, concretises the distance between the two parties.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
S3 9	<p>後來啊 (But later on):</p> <p>This introduces a time frame to the poem.</p> <p>(+CE)</p>
10	<p>墳墓 (grave):</p> <p>A grave, which signifies the house of the dead, is seemingly used to concretise nostalgia by 是 (was).</p> <p>矮矮的 (lowly):</p> <p>This lowliness <u>contrasts</u> with the supposedly profound sense of nostalgia.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
11	<p>我在外頭 (Me on the outside):</p> <p>This, together with L12, concretises the distance between the two parties.</p>

	(+CE) (UE)
12	母親在裏頭 (Mother on the inside): This, together with L11, concretises the distance between the two parties. (+CE) (UE)
S4 13	而現在 (And at present): This introduces a time frame to the poem. (+CE)
14	海峽 (strait): The strait, which <u>signifies</u> the geographical separation between Taiwan and the mainland, is seemingly used to concretise nostalgia by 是 (becomes). 淺淺的 (shallow): This shallowness <u>contrasts</u> with the supposedly deep sense of nostalgia. (+CE) (UE)
15	我在這頭 (Me on this side): This, together with L16, concretises the distance between the two parties. (+CE) (UE)
16	大陸在那頭 (Mainland on the other side): This, together with L15, concretises the distance between the two parties. (+CE) (UE)

Analysis:

This is one of Yu Guangzhong's most well-known poems, by which he tries to express his strong sentiments through concretising *nostalgia*, a concept more known by its name than by its essence. The poem aims to reveal the nature of nostalgia, the apparent theme, and in so doing the poet's feelings are given a thorough and profound display.

Going through the poem, it is noted that relying on a number of simple, commonplace images/concepts (such as 郵票 (stamp), 船票 (boat ticket), 墳墓 (grave) and 海峽 (strait), etc.), this poem can be classified as a **meaningful** poem composed within the **OA** and interpretable through **internal contextualisation** (which is further supported by instances of +CE throughout the poems, as well as the title) without the need for looking for references outside of a general reader's **MiC**. The prevalence of meaningful units which produce +CE is indicative of Yu's effort in establishing a poetic world by enhancing the reader's understanding of that world, which is the necessary condition for producing *shiyi*. Since the poem is considered meaningful,

Type A unintelligibility can be ruled out, but it is still unsure at this stage if **Type B unintelligibility** can also be ruled out.

Nostalgia is apparently the theme of the poem. This can be seen from the above table, where besides the title, there are four repetitions of the term, i.e. one in each stanza. Taking “nostalgia” as the possible theme, initial attempts to thematise the poem can be made in the following table.

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s)
T	鄉愁 (Nostalgia)	+CE	<u>possible theme</u> : nostalgia
1	小時候 (When I was young)	+CE	no theme
2	郵票 (stamp)	+CE	theme-familiarising
	小小的 (tiny, tiny)	UE	no theme
3	我在這頭 (Me on this side)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
4	母親在那頭 (Mother on the other side)	+CE UE	
5	長大後 (When I grew up)	+CE	no theme
6	船票 (boat ticket)	+CE	theme-familiarising
	窄窄的 (narrow)	UE	no theme
7	我在這頭 (Me on this side)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
8	新娘在那頭 (My bride on the other side)	+CE UE	
9	後來啊 (But later on)	+CE	no theme
10	墳墓 (grave)	+CE	theme-familiarising
	矮矮的 (lowly)	UE	no theme
11	我在外頭 (Me on the outside)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
12	母親在裏頭 (Mother on the inside)	+CE UE	

13	而現在 (And at present)	+CE	no theme
14	海峽 (strait)	+CE	theme-familiarising
	淺淺的 (shallow)	UE	no theme
15	我在這頭 (Me on this side)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
16	大陸在那頭 (Mainland on the other side)	+CE UE	

The above table shows how the poet tries to investigate, based on the (un)familiarising meaningful units, the inner nature of nostalgia in the poem. As suggested in the analysis of the last poem, according to the simple rule, all those contributing to familiarity of this nostalgia can be regarded as theme-familiarising (such as L2, L6, L10 and L14), while those deviating from the concept can be regarded as theme-unfamiliarising (such as L3-4, L7-L8, L11-L12 and L15-L16).

With reference to the above (second) table, and according to the poem, nostalgia exists where there is a distance between two parties, one being the poet, and the other being, chronologically, Mother, the bride, Mother and the mainland.⁶⁵⁰ The son-mother combination, the husband-wife combination and the individual-country combination are broken down and linked up by only a sense of nostalgia, as signified by 郵票 (stamp), 船票 (boat ticket), 墳墓 (grave) and 海峽 (strait) in each of the stanzas respectively. Besides, it seems as time passed by, the nostalgia became more intense as the concretising object, or rather the link, became more rigid and counter-productive: the stamp and the boat ticket are tools through which the distance can be reduced spiritually (as in the case of a delivered letter) or physically (as in the case of an arrived traveller), but the grave and the strait are comparatively permanent barriers rather than any means of overcoming the distance between the two parties concerned.⁶⁵¹ For the poet, the distance, here no longer a physical one, between his

⁶⁵⁰ If, for instance, extra effort is expended in internal contextualisation along the depth dimension, a male-female/poet-she dichotomy can arguably be identified, considering the mainland being taken as the main body of China, usually expressed by the feminine “she”. This effectively reminds a general reader of *ying yang*, of which a whole is composed. This extra effort, however, may not be warranted according to the principle of optimal relevance.

⁶⁵¹ Similarly, He Yuanjian 何元儉 and Tao Jian 陶健 consider that the four images can be classified into two groups: the first which includes the stamp and the boat ticket is able to “connect [despite] nostalgia” (溝通鄉愁), while the second which includes the grave and the strait is unable to do so. See He and Tao 2009, 35.

deceased mother and himself can never be bridged, and the separation between mainland China and the poet (or whom he represents, the people in Taiwan, or where he is living, Taiwan) seems a politically permanent divide that will continue to exist in his foreseeable future. Such permanent distance/separation in these two cases paradoxically reinforces the nostalgia attached to the distance/separation. It is because only when the distance/separation still exists will the nostalgia not fade away. That is why all these images of stamp, boat ticket, grave and strait are just seemingly used to concretise nostalgia, which in fact should be the awareness of the distance between the two parties. From the above, it is clear that the use of the four images is conducive to producing familiarising effect as far as understanding of nostalgia is concerned. But such understanding is only enhanced further with unfamiliarisation of the images in terms of their linking or barrier effect with respect to the distance/separation under question. And it is through the said (un)familiarisation processes that the reader gains in understanding of nostalgia, or the sense of distance/separation, which is familiarised. Awareness of the truthfulness in such enhanced understanding represents *shiyi* achieved by a reader of the poem.

With all the +CE produced by the meaningful units in the first table, the poem can be considered a work of “**subtlety**”, and its openness to contextualisation is confirmed. The meaningful units concerned are, therefore, likely to allow thematisation by a general reader with a view to deriving *shiyi*, the process of which has been given in the above. As in the previous poem analysed, however, it is noted that some units identified in the poem remain thematisation-neutral (as indicated by “no theme” in the second table). A suggested reason for this theme-neutrality is that these units, such as 小時候 (When I was young) in L1, 長大後 (When I grew up) in L5 and the like are meant for constructing the poetic world through providing a clear time frame to the reader. As for 小小的 (tiny, tiny) in L2, 窄窄的 (narrow) in L6 and the like in L10 and L14, they are meant for directly qualifying the 郵票 (stamp), 船票 (boat ticket) and the like respectively. This is despite the fact that on reading the poem as a whole, as contrasted with the on-line interpretation approach usually adopted in the analysis, such adjectives, or meaningful units, can be construed as making a contrast with the distance/separation to create extra familiarising effect.⁶⁵² Besides, a further complication is, when taken together, L1, L5, L9 and L13 form a group of lines informing the reader of a full life cycle including stages of the youth, the adult and the aged, thus delivering enhanced cognitive effect, which further reveals the nature of

⁶⁵² He Yuanjian and Tao Jian do not specifically refer to a particular effect, but their analysis is akin to elaboration on how some effect is achieved by means of rhetorical uses of such contrast. See He and Tao 2009, 35-36.

nostalgia, that it is perhaps haunting us all our life. Such revelation or familiarisation of nostalgia of course further improves *shiyi* of the poem, but only subject to additional processing effort.

The usual assumption is that the poet experienced a situation of nostalgia, and then wrote it down in his chosen linguistic/poetic form, containing all meaningful units as clues to interpretation. From the reader's point of view, even if he has never experienced nostalgia, he will be able, through (re)construction of the poetic world, to identify with it or even experience it as if for real. In other words, the poet is doing the concretisation, while the reader is doing the (re-)concretisation. In doing his part of (re-)concretisation through thematisation, the reader is likely to improve his **self-understanding** (also part of the overall truthfulness), by enhancing his understanding of certain universal human sentiments. If he has experienced nostalgia before, the world so (re)constructed, which is supposed to be a profound yet concise description of nostalgia, is likely to complement his one-sided view, giving him a fuller picture of nostalgia. And of course all this is in line with the mechanism through which elements from the **MaC/mac** are assimilated into a reader's **MiC/mic**. The awareness of such enhanced understanding of nostalgia and self-understanding contributes to the *shiyi* of this poem, practically a sense of overcoming one's limitations in achieving a more complete selfhood.

Specifically for Yu's poem, as seen from the two tables above, the reader has been offered numerous clues for (re)constructing the poetic world. Since the clues, including all the simple images/concepts as mentioned earlier, are all readily comprehensible, almost nil additional efforts are required for external contextualisation. This is possible, as suggested above, since the poem was composed taking the **OA** into account. A general reader of mainland China, Taiwan or Hong Kong around the time of composition or at our time, therefore, would encounter no difficulties in interpreting the poem in general. This in turn reflects on Yu's competence in identifying the core **OA** (rather than the **oa** in the absence of meaningful units in the poem that can be referred to the **mac/mic**).

As to **prosody**, the poem comprises 26 lines, each of which has 9-15 characters (more varied as compared to, say, 8-10 characters in Xu Zhimo's "Liangge yueliang"), excluding punctuation marks. The varied lengths of the lines help to avoid the creation of a monotonous rhythm, which is especially important as the poem runs rather long. **Melodic effect** (such as that achieved through repetition/parallelism of lines/line structure in the four stanzas), however, is not adequate in itself to directly

create *shiyi*, or even subtlety, though it is arguably possible to result in strengthening of +CE through reinforcing the message/meaning of the line/stanza concerned by means of the (un)familiarity it can contribute to. However, given the above analysis on the derivation of *shiyi*, the effect of such structural flexibility and melodic effect, etc. on *shiyi* enhancement is not at all significant.

Following the above analysis, the poem can be regarded as a **good poem** (in terms of *shiyi*) lying nearer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** (i.e. still suffering from a certain degree of **Type B unintelligibility**).

(M7) Gu Cheng's 顧城⁶⁵³ "Yidairen" 一代人 (This Generation, 1979⁶⁵⁴):

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined
T	<p>一代人 (This Generation):</p> <p>This introduces at the beginning the time frame of the poem, highlighting the focus of the poem being the generation at the time of and around the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).</p> <p>(+CE)</p>
1.	<p>黑夜 (Dark night):</p> <p>This <u>signifies</u> the dark side, the turmoil, etc. of the age.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p> <p>黑色的眼睛 (dark eyes):</p> <p>This can imply some black mark left by the age. Dark eyes are normal in Chinese, but since such dark eyes are given (給) by dark night, they bear a negative <u>connotation</u>.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>

⁶⁵³ Gu is considered one of the representatives of the Obscure poets (朦朧詩人 *menglong shiren*), who according to Maghiel Van Crevel, "wrote in free verse, full of non-standardized and therefore polyvalent imagery", and "were strongly influenced by foreign literature and displayed an emphatic and in official PRC literature unheard-of desire for individualism and self-expression in all aspects of their work" (1996, 22). This, nevertheless, amounts to information outside of MiC.

⁶⁵⁴ The translation is from Michelle Yeh, who has wrongly dated the poem's year of composition as 1968 (when the poet was just as young as 12). See Yeh 1991, 82, for her translation and dating. For the correct dating of the poem, please refer to Gu Cheng 2007, 31.

2.	<p>卻 (though [not translated]):</p> <p>This makes a <u>twist</u> in meaning, and suggests that this generation are still hopeful of finding the bright future, despite the darkness they have gone through.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p> <p>用它尋找光明 (With which [I] search for light):</p> <p>它 (“which”, i.e. dark eyes) is <u>contrasted</u> with 光明 (light).</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
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Analysis:

One of Gu’s most famous poems, this simple, short poem is assumed to be pinpointing the fate of the lost generation of the 1960s: their fate lies in their looking forward hopefully to a bright future despite the dark age they have been through.⁶⁵⁵

The title suggests a timeframe, which is more related to building of the poetic world. In L1, 黑夜 (Dark night) and 黑色的眼睛 (dark eyes) form a contrasting pair: the former is the active one, while the latter the passive one. As mentioned in the above, 黑色的眼睛 (dark eyes), familiar and normal in Chinese (but not sufficient culturally and/or literarily to be considered as a constituent of **Chineseness**), is unfamiliarised through its combination with 黑夜 (Dark night), but similarly, 黑夜 (Dark night) is familiarised through its combination with 黑色的眼睛 (dark eyes). Thus, this pair can be considered as producing (un)familiarising effects to each other.

In L2, 卻 (though [not translated]) is employed to introduce an antithesis to L1, because this generation are not satisfied with being kept in the given darkness, but surprisingly, or in fact naturally, they use their dark eyes as the tools to search for light. Darkness and light also form a contrasting pair across the lines, mutually reinforcing the intensity of each other through (un)familiarisation. Besides, figuratively, being

⁶⁵⁵ Actually, 一代人 (This Generation), 黑夜 (Dark night) and 黑色的眼睛 (dark eyes) can also be possible themes. But the length of this poem is such that, as compared to other longer pieces, a reader can almost finish reading the poem in no time, and repeat this reading process a few times if he wants to within a short duration, so that he can compare all possible themes as fast as possible to determine which is the more probable one. Besides, according to the revised hypothesis, a theme is more likely to be related to some abstract concept on some existential concern. Thus, 一代人 (This Generation), 黑夜 (Dark night) and 黑色的眼睛 (dark eyes), would be less favourable choices as compared to say “fate”, which is usually considered as unknown.

kept in the dark can mean not knowing the truth, and searching for light can thus mean seeking the truth.

It is noted that composed in a number of simple, commonplace images/concepts (such as 一代人 (This Generation), 黑夜 (Dark night) and 黑色的眼睛 (dark eyes), etc.), this poem does not require its reader, supposedly a general reader, to refer to outside of his **MiC** for its comprehension.⁶⁵⁶ Thus, this poem can be classified as a **meaningful** poem largely composed within the **OA** and interpretable through **internal contextualisation** (which is further supported by instances of +CE throughout the poem, as well as the title). But relating 一代人 (This Generation) to the Cultural Revolution would definitely require knowledge from the **mac/mic**, or **Chineseness**, or the corresponding **oa**. Still, given Gu's success in the use of meaningful units which produce +CE, a general reader is able to establish a poetic world, the necessary condition for producing *shiyi*. Besides, since the poem is considered meaningful, **Type A unintelligibility** (but not **Type B unintelligibility** at this stage) can be ruled out.

If, as stated, “fate” is taken as the possible theme, initial attempts to thematise the poem can be made in the following table:

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s) <u>possible theme</u> : fate
T	一代人 (This Generation)	+CE	no theme
1	黑夜 (Dark night)	+CE, UE	theme-unfamiliarising
	黑色的眼睛 (dark eyes)	+CE, UE	no theme
2	卻 (though [not translated])	+CE, UE	no theme
	用它尋找光明 (With which [I] search for light)	+CE, UE	theme-familiarising

⁶⁵⁶ Some readers, however, may find that it may need some prior study/research for acquiring the relevant information on the Cultural Revolution referred to by 一代人 (This Generation). This of course is understandable as there cannot be any *exact overlapping* between the MiC of a particular reader and that of the general reader, which is actually a collective concept generalised from individual readers having an **OA** between their **MiCs** (all considered falling within the **MaC**). In this particular case, however, knowledge of the Cultural Revolution is likely to be classified as constituents of **Chineseness**, and also the **mac** and/or the **mic** of a general reader, as well as the corresponding **oa**.

The poem can be regarded as a work of “**subtlety**” since, with all the +CE produced by the meaningful units in the first table, the poem’s openness to contextualisation is established. This means that the meaningful units are also likely to allow thematisation by a general reader with a view to deriving *shiyi*, the process of which has been given in the above. It is noted that due to the length of this poem, only two meaningful units, which are 黑夜 (Dark night) and 用它尋找光明 (With which [I] search for light), have produced theme-(un)familiarising effect. However, these two units are already adequate for thematisation. L1 is like a statement of known fact in the poet/general reader’s **MiC**, telling us that it is the fate that the dark eyes are given, which means the darkness is not obtained by our own choice but forced onto us. L2, however, stresses that it can also be the fate to actively search for a bright future. The artistic value of this poem of course comes from successfully subverting the familiar MiC of a general reader regarding “fate”.

As suggested above, the aim of the poem is assumed to be pinpointing the fate of the lost generation of the 1960s: their fate lies in their looking forward hopefully to a bright future despite the dark age they have been through. This is rather like some cliché, which can only be truly impressive and appreciated with the (un)familiarisation process in place to derive *shiyi*. *Shiyi* of this poem is realised as an awareness of enhanced understanding of the nature of “fate”, which is not just passively accepting unfavourable circumstances as one’s fate, but actively participating in changing the fate. Such *shiyi* is further enhanced with the renewed understanding developed after reading the whole poem that it is the “fate” of 一代人 (This Generation, or rather, **a whole generation**), which implies that the loss or tragedy was not limited to just 我 (I) or a small number of individuals, and hence the fate of all of them to complete the mission of searching for light. The very scale of such loss/tragedy and the magnitude of human involvement increase the pressure felt by the reader, and as an unfamiliarising device, this exaggeration exerts strong unfamiliarising effects leading to further concretisation of the theme.

Simplistic in construction and minimal in prosodic devices used, the poem is considered not having any significant effect derived from **prosody**. Besides, although there seems to have no particular reference to the **mac/mic** (whether the classical one, or any new one established for new poetry *tradition*, if any) except for the *cultural* reference of 一代人 (This Generation) to the Cultural Revolution, this cultural reference is most vital to the interpretation of the poem based on the theme as identified. As such, knowledge of the **mac/mic** seems to be indispensable for derivation of a high level of *shiyi* in this poem.

Following the above, it can be concluded that the poem is a **good poem** (in terms of *shiyi*) lying nearer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** (i.e. still suffering from a certain degree of **Type B unintelligibility**).

(M8) Gu Cheng's 顧城 "Yuan he jin" 遠和近 (Far and Near, 1980⁶⁵⁷):

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined
T	遠和近 (Far and Near): This introduces at the beginning the main theme of the poem, which is the two sides of the concept of distance. (+CE) (UE)
S1 1	你 (You): This introduces the character in this poem. (+CE)
2	一會看我 (Now look at me): This helps to construct the poetic world. (+CE)
3	一會看雲 (Now look at the clouds): This helps to construct the poetic world. (+CE)
S2 4	我覺得 (I feel): This introduces the interpretation of L2 and L3 by "I". ⁶⁵⁸ (+CE)
5	你看我時很遠 (You are very far when you look at me): This helps to construct the unfamiliar poetic world: 你 (you), who should be close to me while looking at me, is said to be 很遠 (very far). (+CE) (UE)
6	你看雲時很近 ([You are] Very close when you look at the clouds):

⁶⁵⁷ For the original, refer to Yeh 1991, 168; for the translation and year of composition, 82. The year of composition has been confirmed with Gu Cheng 2007, 53.

⁶⁵⁸ According to Michelle Yeh, there is "a juxtaposition of two contrasting perspectives" in this poem. See Yeh 1991, 82. It is considered suffice, however, to identify only one perspective, the one of the author or the "I", as introduced in this line.

	This helps to construct the unfamiliar poetic world: 你 (you), who should be looking away from me while looking at the clouds, is said to be 很近 (very close). ⁶⁵⁹ (+CE) (UE)
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Analysis:

This poem, one of Gu's most famous short pieces of work, tries to throw light on the nature of distance by comparing its two sides, namely "far" and "near", as the title suggests. It is also noted that with just a few simple images/concepts (such as 遠 and 近 (Far and Near), 你 (You), 我 (I), 雲 (clouds), etc.), this poem can be classified as a **meaningful** poem composed within the **OA** and interpretable through **internal contextualisation** (which is further supported by instances of +CE throughout the poem, as well as the title) without depending much on references outside of a general reader's **MiC**. Since the poem is considered meaningful, **Type A unintelligibility** can be ruled out, but it is still unsure at this stage if **Type B unintelligibility** can be ruled out as well. The poem can also be regarded as a work of **subtlety**, in the sense that, with all the +CE produced by the meaningful units during first-level contextualisation (as indicated in the first table above), the poem is open to further contextualisation. This means that the meaningful units are also likely to (though not necessarily so) allow thematisation by a general reader for deriving *shiyi*, the process of which will be given shortly.

L1 introduces a character 你 (You) to the reader. L2 and L3 are like statements of fact, both helping to construct the poetic world. Up to this point, the poem has provided the reader with nil UE/FE. In S2, L4 introduces the poet's perspective of the facts as told in S1 that is to be revealed in the two lines that follow. L4 thus produces only +CE. The last two lines, as Michelle Yeh suggests, form a paradox which is used to highlight the difference between physical distance and psychological distance.⁶⁶⁰ According to the proposed theoretical framework, however, the poem

⁶⁵⁹ Yeh suggests that the paradox [expressed in L5-L6] "reveals something about the relationship between the speaker and the 'you', intimating psychological distance and lack of communication" (1991, 82). This can arguably be classified as information outside of MiC.

⁶⁶⁰ As the previous footnote states, Yeh considers the paradox of the poem as "intimating psychological distance and lack of communication", and thus she interprets the poem in the direction of identifying "deep sadness and loneliness" in the "seemingly objective imagery" of the poem. Thereupon, "the association of loss of direction and elusiveness evoked by the image of clouds" is seen to be suggesting "a strained, even doomed, relationship". See Yeh 1991, 82. This, however, should be regarded as

can be viewed as subjecting “distance” to concretisation through (un)familiarisation, as illustrated in the table below:

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s)
T	遠和近 (Far and Near)	+CE UE	<u>possible theme</u> : distance
S1 1	你 (You)	+CE	no theme
2	一會看我 (Now look at me)	+CE	no theme
3	一會看雲 (Now look at the clouds)	+CE	no theme
S2 4	我覺得(I feel)	+CE	no theme
5	你看我時很遠 (You are very far when you look at me)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising
6	你看雲時很近 ([You are] Very close when you look at the clouds)	+CE UE	theme-unfamiliarising

According to our framework, the last two lines first go through first-level contextualisation, so that UE is produced through interaction between the meaningful units within the poem, and meaningful units in the poem and those in the reader’s **MiC**. Similar to the effect of paradox, what is achieved is something like: 你 (you) should be close to me while looking at me, but is perceived to be 很遠 (very far), and 你 (you) should be looking away from me while looking at the clouds, but is perceived to be 很近 (very close). In addition, the poem will be subjected to thematisation, the higher-level contextualisation, so that distance is concretised through unfamiliarisation by the so-called paradox. *Shiyi* of this poem accordingly lies in an awareness of enhanced understanding of the nature of “(psychological/physical) distance”. As such, the proposed framework seems to

one possible interpretation out of the more general difference between physical distance and psychological distance. Other possible interpretations may include, *inter alia*, taking “the clouds” as symbolising the ideal cherished by “you”. Besides, since the effect of Yeh’s saying can be reduced to a kind of common knowledge, her saying is considered not strictly out of **MiC**, and hence “can *arguably* be classified as information outside of **MiC**” in the previous footnote.

possess a higher level of explanatory power than what Michelle Yeh has suggested.⁶⁶¹

As seen from the two tables above, the poet has offered numerous clues to interpretation, which are all readily comprehensible, to guide the reader into (re)constructing the poetic world, so that almost nil additional efforts are required for external contextualisation. This is possible only if the poem was composed taking into account the **OA**. As with the previous poem by Gu, this poem also does not depend on prosody for derivation of *shiyi*. And there are not any detectable references to the **oa**.

Following the above analysis, the poem can be regarded as a **good poem** (in terms of *shiyi*) lying nearer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** (i.e. still suffering from a certain degree of **Type B unintelligibility**).

(M9) Zheng Chouyu's 鄭愁予 "Cuo wu" 錯誤 (A Mistake, 1955⁶⁶²):

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined
T	錯誤 (A mistake): This possibly defines the main theme of the poem. (+CE)
S1 1	江南 (south of the Yangtze River): This is traditionally regarded as a place of prosperity, of joy, and of enjoyment. (+CE) 走過 (go by): This <u>implies</u> that "I" am not staying there (but is this also a mistake?), and <u>echoes</u> 過客 (the one passing by) in the last line. Besides, the Chinese character 過 can mean mistake, too. (+CE) (UE) (FE)
2	那等在季節裡的容顏 (Those faces waiting in the seasons):

⁶⁶¹ Yeh's analysis can be considered a piece of ingenious commentary, but her unclaimed approach (if she has one to follow), is not believed to be applicable to other poems, and hence its limited reproducibility in poetry analysis.

⁶⁶² It is included in his collection titled *Meng tu shang* 夢土上 (On Dreamland) published in 1955. See Zheng 2003, 18.

	<p>This introduces other characters in the poetic world, specifying that they are left somewhere waiting. 容顏 (faces) represents the persons left waiting (<u>metonymy</u>).</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
3	<p>如蓮花的開落 ([...] like lotus flowers having their bloom and doom):</p> <p>This <u>compares</u> the faces to the flowers.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
S2 4	<p>東風不來 三月的柳絮不飛 (Without the east wind, the willow catkin of March will never fly):</p> <p>This reminds the reader of the colloquial expression of 萬事俱備，只欠東風 (everything is ready except for the easterly), in which the easterly (which can be a <u>symbol</u> for say luck, fate, etc.) is assumend to define the condition for achieving a desired result.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
5.	<p>寂寞的城 (solitary town):</p> <p>This reminds the reader of Qian Zhongshu's metaphor of city in his <i>A City Besieged</i>. And, of course, <u>symbolically</u>, a city is there for one to come and go, enter and leave.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
6.	<p>向晚 (towards the evening):</p> <p>This <u>implies</u> that it is already rather late (or towards the end of, say, a relationship).</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
7.	<p>聲音不響 三月的春帷不揭 (Only when footsteps are heard that the spring curtain of March is raised):</p> <p>This <u>contrasts</u> yet <u>echoes</u> the description in L4, and <u>reinforces</u> the idea of the requirement of a necessary condition for achieving a desired outcome.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE) (FE)</p>
8.	<p>窗扉緊掩 (casement tightly closed):</p> <p>Following the image of in the previous line, this further suggests that there must be some condition to be fulfilled before this casement of heart (<u>simile</u>) can be opened.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
S3 9	<p>我達達的馬蹄聲是美麗的錯誤 (The da da of my horse's hoofbeat is a beautiful mistake):</p> <p>This introduces a twist, informing that the hoofbeat (<u>metanomy</u>) is a mistake (<u>echoing</u> the title), as it is probably mistaken as 東風 (the east wind) or 聲音 (footsteps).</p>

	<p>達達的馬蹄聲 (the da da of my horse's hoofbeat):</p> <p>The 達達 (<i>da da</i>) is the sound made by the horse's hoofs, but the Chinese character of <i>da</i> also means <i>daoda</i> (到達), i.e. reaching.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE) (FE)</p>
10.	<p>我不是歸人，是個過客 (I'm not the one returning, but the one passing by):</p> <p>This points out the mistake: the one passing by is mistaken as the one returning, and also <u>echoes</u> 過 in 走過 (go by) in the first line. Besides, as stated earlier, the Chinese character 過 can mean mistake.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE) (FE)</p>

Analysis:

This is one of Zheng's most famous poems that is devoted to the description of a mistake, as indicated in the title and repeated in L9. In this poem, the mistake is cogently concretised. The *shiyi* achieved as a whole is strong.

As far as construction of the poetic world is concerned, the numerous simple images/concepts (such as 江南 (south of the Yangtze River) and 走過 (go by) in L1, 季節 (seasons) and 容顏 (faces) in L2, 蓮花 (lotus flowers) in L3, and the like) used in the poem have rendered it easy to understand. As such, this poem can be classified as a **meaningful** poem composed mainly within the OA and interpretable through **internal contextualisation** (which is further supported by instances of +CE throughout the poem, as well as the title), without requiring a reader to refer to references outside of his **MiC**. Since the poem is considered meaningful, **Type A unintelligibility** can be ruled out, but it is still uncertain at this stage if **Type B unintelligibility** can also be ruled out.

For first-level contextualisation, this poem has provided a lot of inter/intra-line examples for reference and information. The title defines the main theme of the poem, and thus provides +CE regarding what exactly the poem aims to say.⁶⁶³ In S1, 江南 (south of the Yangtze River) in L1 is traditionally regarded as a place of prosperity, of joy, and of enjoyment, and hence its **Chineseness** reference, but 走過 (go by) already implies that this "I" is not staying there. This provides a clue and echoes the theme, especially after the poem is read, and hence its resulting strong +CE

⁶⁶³ As the poem forcefully concretises this main theme, the title means much more than literally when first read after the reader has finished reading the poem, and it is thus considered to have created strong +CE for the poem.

for the poem. In L2, 那等在季節裡的容顏 (Those faces waiting in the seasons) introduces other characters in the poetic world, as represented by 容顏 (faces), specifying that they are left somewhere waiting. In L3, 如蓮花的開落 ([...] like lotus flowers having their bloom and doom) compares the faces to the flowers, or in our jargon, the faces (representing the women) are (un)familiarised.⁶⁶⁴

In S2, 東風不來 三月的柳絮不飛 (Without the east wind, the willow catkin of March will never fly) in L4 reminds the reader of the colloquial **Chineseness** expression of 萬事俱備，只欠東風 (everything is ready except for the easterly) which defines the condition for achieving a desired result. This shows how the clue, or meaningful unit, is referred to a particular piece of information in the reader's MiC. The (un)familiarising effect and CE⁶⁶⁵ are much strengthened when read together with L7 (i.e. 蹙音不響 三月的春帷不揭 (Only when footsteps are heard that the spring curtain of March is raised)), where unfamiliarity is introduced given the expression in L4. In L5, 寂寞的城 (solitary town) reminds the reader of Qian Zhongshu's metaphor of city in his *A City Besieged*, which is likely in the MiC/mic of the general reader, and hence its strong familiarising effect.⁶⁶⁶ Besides, together with the description in L6, i.e. 恰若青石的街道向晚 (Just like bluestone-paved streets pointing towards the evening), the, presumably, lady's 心 (heart) is vividly concretised, or unfamiliarised, in L5. 向晚 (towards the evening) in L6 implies that it is already rather late, which makes much sense when read together with 歸人 (the one returning) in L10, where (un)familiarising effect is achieved by bringing the two units together. In L7, 蹙音不響 三月的春帷不揭 (Only when footsteps are heard that the spring curtain of March is raised) contrasts yet echoes the description in L4, and reinforces the idea of the requirement of a necessary condition for achieving a desired outcome, which can be regarded as **intra-line contextualisation** by means of (un)familiarisation. Following the image in the previous line, 窗扉緊掩 (casement tightly closed) in L8 further suggests that there must be some condition to be fulfilled before this casement of heart can be opened. In addition, this also develops the

⁶⁶⁴ Whether it is familiarisation or unfamiliarisation depends on the **relative familiarity** of women to flowers as in the particular reader's MiC. What is clear is that it is "the flowers" that provides the effect, whether it is familiarising *or* unfamiliarising.

⁶⁶⁵ (Un)familiarising effect is actually accompanied by its resulting increase in CE, but in the table as well as the analysis in the main text, "CE" is, unless otherwise specified, especially reserved for accounting for the effect that is mainly responsible for constructing the poetic world.

⁶⁶⁶ Qian's city is one where many people outside would like to enter, and many others inside would like to leave. The qualifier 寂寞的 (lonely), however, suggests that the town is somehow deserted, which provides a contrast between the city frequented and the town deserted.

town/heart metaphor by introducing unfamiliarity given the context.

In S3, 我達達的馬蹄聲是美麗的錯誤 (The *da da* of my horse's hoofbeat is a beautiful mistake) in L10 introduces a twist, informing that the hoofbeat is a mistake, as it is probably mistaken as 東風 (the east wind) or 聲音 (footsteps). Here, unfamiliarity is introduced by comparing [the hearing of] 我達達的馬蹄聲 (The *da da* of my horse's hoofbeat) to, and thus concretising, the mistake. When the image of hoofbeat is viewed side by side with the heart/town metaphor, with the possibility of the hoofbeat echoing the heartbeat, the two are said to be (un)familiarising each other. In the last line, 我不是歸人，是個過客 (I'm not the one returning, but the one passing by) clearly and emphatically points out the mistake: the one passing by is mistaken as the one returning. This at once provides a thread by which all fragments/images of the poem can be linked up, and in this way, all of these fragments/images are now seen in harmony with each other, together contributing to concretising the theme.

Taking “a mistake” as the possible theme, further attempts to thematise the poem can be made in the following table:

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s)
T	錯誤 (A mistake)	+CE	<u>possible theme:</u> A mistake
S1 1	江南 (south of the Yangtze River)	+CE	no theme
	走過 (go by)	+CE, UE, FE	theme-unfamiliarising
2	那等在季節裡的容顏 (Those faces waiting in the seasons)	+CE, UE	theme-unfamiliarising
3	如蓮花的開落 ([...] like lotus flowers having their bloom and doom)	+CE, UE	theme-unfamiliarising
S2 4	東風不來 三月的柳絮不飛 (Without the east wind, the willow catkin of March will never fly)	+CE, UE	theme-unfamiliarising
5	寂寞的城 (solitary town)	+CE, UE	theme-unfamiliarising
6	向晚 (towards the evening)	+CE, UE	theme-unfamiliarising

7	登音不響 三月的春帷不揭 (Only when footsteps are heard that the spring curtain of March is raised)	+CE, UE, FE	theme-unfamiliarising
8	窗扉緊掩 (casement tightly closed)	+CE, UE	theme-unfamiliarising
S3 9	我達達的馬蹄聲是美麗的錯誤 (The <i>da da</i> of my horse's hoofbeat is a beautiful mistake)	+CE, UE, FE	theme-unfamiliarising
	達達的馬蹄聲 (the <i>da da</i> of my horse's hoofbeat)	FE	theme-unfamiliarising
10	我不是歸人，是個過客 (I'm not the one returning, but the one passing by)	+CE, UE, FE	theme-unfamiliarising

The above (second) table shows how the poet tries to investigate, based on the (un)familiarisation devices in terms of the meaningful units, the inner nature of “a mistake” in the poem: all those contributing to familiarity of this “mistake” concept can be regarded as theme-familiarising (none in this poem though), while those deviating from the concept can be regarded as theme-unfamiliarising (all of the ten lines). It is noted that although simple images are used throughout the poem, the combinations of these simple images are complex expressions of ideas that prove to be able to unfamiliarise the “mistake”. For instance, 東風不來 三月的柳絮不飛 (Without the east wind, the willow catkin of March will never fly) in L4 is a complex expression containing such simple images as 東風 (the east wind, though with **Chineseness** reference), 三月 (March), etc., and this combination suggests a more complicated meaning in that within this line, there is a causal relationship, which is used to unfamiliarise, rather than familiarise, the “mistake”. Similar unfamiliarisation processes occur in other lines in the poem. And it is through the said unfamiliarisation processes that the reader gains in understanding of the “mistake”, or the sense of distance/separation, which is now concretised. Awareness of the truthfulness in such enhanced understanding represents *shiyi* achieved by the poem.

The poem can be regarded as a work of “**subtlety**”, because with all the FE/UE produced by the meaningful units in the first table, the poem's openness to contextualisation is confirmed (while the prevalence of +CE provides a solid foundation for possible thematisation). This means that the meaningful units are

also likely to allow thematisation by a general reader with a view to deriving *shiyi*, the process of which has been given in the above.

As seen from the two tables above, the poet has provided numerous clues for guiding the reader into (re)constructing the poetic world. These clues, including all the simple images/concepts employed, are all readily comprehensible, so almost nil additional efforts are required for external contextualisation. This clearly shows that the poem was composed after the poet had duly taken into account the core **OA**. In contrast, references to 江南 (south of the Yangtze River) in L1, 東風 (east wind) in L4 and 寂寞的城 (solitary town) in L5 can be regarded as making use of constituents in the core **oa**, which highlights the poet's proficiency in enriching the poem with **Chineseness**. Accordingly, a general reader of mainland China, Taiwan or Hong Kong around the time of composition or at our time would encounter no difficulties in interpreting the poem in general.

As with other poems analysed earlier, **prosody** does not seem to noticeably contribute to *shiyi*.

Following the above analysis, the poem can be regarded as a **good poem** (in terms of *shiyi*) lying nearer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** (i.e. still suffering from a certain degree of **Type B unintelligibility**).

(M10) Tian Han's 田漢 (1898-1968) “Ye” 夜 (Night, 1920⁶⁶⁷):

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined
T	夜 (Night): This introduces the time frame of the poem, but without giving too much information as to the theme of the poem. (+CE)
1	旋律 (melodic): This <u>signifies</u> musical orderliness and beauty. (+CE) (UE) 世界 (world):

⁶⁶⁷ For the original in Chinese and year of composition, refer to Xie and Jiang 2010, 328 and 329.

	<p>This can suggest the background, the surrounding, the environment, the society, etc. (<u>suggestiveness</u>)</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
2	<p>沉默 (silent):</p> <p>This signifies the opposite scenario of musical orderliness and beauty (旋律) and creates a <u>contrast</u> with the previous line based on <u>parallelism</u> (familiarity).</p> <p>(+CE) (UE) (FE)</p> <p>大海 (ocean):</p> <p>This can also suggest the background, the surrounding, the environment, the society, etc. (<u>suggestiveness</u>), and there is the <u>contrast</u> between 大海 and 世界 of the previous line (in a way that a part is contrasted with a whole) based on <u>parallelism</u> (familiarity).</p> <p>(+CE) (UE) (FE)</p> <p>沉默的大海 (A silent ocean):</p> <p>This creates further unfamiliarity through the <u>strange collocation</u> as the sea is not usually associated with a taciturn nature.</p> <p>(UE)</p> <p>L1 and L2:</p> <p>Together they constitute an antithesis and alternative scenarios (between musical orderliness/beauty and taciturnity) through the techniques of <u>contrast</u> and <u>suggestiveness</u>.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
3	<p>淒淒的是甚麼聲音？ (What is the sound of sadness?):</p> <p>A <u>rhetorical question</u> is used by implying the answer, supposedly sadness, in 淒淒, a more apparent reference to <u>Chineseness</u>.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
4	<p>悠悠的是甚麼情緒？ (What is the emotion of lasting sadness?):</p> <p>A <u>rhetorical question</u> is used by implying the answer, supposedly sadness, in 悠悠, a more apparent reference to <u>Chineseness</u>. <u>Parallelism</u> between L3 and L4 results in enhanced familiarity.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
5	<p>難索解 (puzzled):</p> <p>This provides a <u>twist</u> against the rhetorical questions in L3-L4, creating reader <u>expectation</u> for an answer in the following line(s).</p> <p>(UE)</p>
6	<p>一枝蘆葉 (a branchful of reed leaves):</p> <p>The <u>strange collocation</u> of 一枝 and 蘆葉 results in enhanced unfamiliarity.</p> <p>(UE)</p>

	<p>一枝蘆葉臨風 (a branchful of reed leaves facing the wind): This vividly <u>suggestive image</u> creates further reader expectation. (UE)</p>
7	<p>時而 (Occasionally): This introduces <u>alternatives</u>, or uncertainty, or a combination of scenarios. (UE) 歌舞 (singing and dancing): This refers to something done out of happiness. (+CE) (UE)</p>
8	<p>時而 (Occasionally): This introduces <u>alternatives</u>, or uncertainty, or a combination of scenarios. (UE) 悲哀 (sorrowful): This refers to a negative state of mind. (+CE) (UE)</p>
9	<p>時而 (Occasionally): This introduces <u>alternatives</u>, or uncertainty, or a combination of scenarios. (UE) 驚駭 (terrified): This refers to an even more negative state of mind. (+CE) (UE) L7-L9: This group provides a scenario of <u>progressive enhancement</u> in unfamiliarising effect, considering what is described is just “a branchful of reed leaves”. (+CE) (UE)</p>

Analysis:

One of the poet's most famous works, this short poem can be contextualised, and thus interpreted (supported by instances of +CE in L1-L2, L7-L9, as well as the title), without relying much on searching references outside of a general reader's **MiC**, so it is a poem interpretable through **internal contextualisation**. However, whether *shiyi* will be created is still unknown at this early stage of contextualisation. Therefore, only **Type A unintelligibility**, but not Type B **unintelligibility**, can be ruled out at this stage.

It is noted that whether the +CE can be converted to *shiyi* depends on successful thematisation. The +CE instances are considered contributing to construction of the

poetic world through supplying information of truth to the reader. However, such **truth information** is, just like its counterpart in an ordinary world, simply not the main concern of poetry. Without a clear theme to act as a *shiyi* **maximiser**, the poem is quite open to various interpretations, given the UE/FE it is able to produce as indicated in the above table, yet poses difficulties for the reader to make significant sense out of it along the directions of some serious **existential concerns** through thematising. In the case of this poem, a clear theme has not emerged up to this stage, and that is why this poem provides a good chance for discussing how a theme can be identified, as shown in the following table:

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s)
T	夜 (Night)	+CE	no theme
1	旋律 (melodic)	+CE , UE	no theme
	世界 (world)	+CE , UE	no theme
2	沉默 (silent) (against 旋律 in L1)	+CE , UE, FE	no theme
	大海 (ocean) (against 世界 in L1)	+CE , UE, FE	no theme
	沉默的大海 (a silent ocean)	UE	no theme
	L1-L2	UE	<u>possible theme 1:</u> alternatives of L1 and L2 scenarios
3	淒淒的是甚麼聲音？ (What is the sound of sadness?)	UE	no theme
4	悠悠的是甚麼情緒？ (What is the emotion of lasting sadness?)	UE	no theme
5	難索解 (puzzled)	UE	no theme
6	一枝蘆葉 (a branchful of reed leaves)	UE	no theme
	一枝蘆葉臨風 (a branchful of reed leaves facing the wind)	UE	<u>possible theme 2:</u> individual against the group/society/world/external forces
7	時而 (Occasionally)	UE	no theme
	歌舞 (singing and dancing)	+CE , UE	no theme

8	時而 (Occasionally)	UE	no theme
	悲哀 (sorrowful)	+CE , UE	no theme
9	時而 (Occasionally)	UE	no theme
	驚駭 (terrified)	+CE , UE	no theme
	L7-L9	+CE , UE	possible thematization: responses when faced with the two possible themes

The title of “Night” and L1 are not too informative, and fail to offer any strong hint as to what theme should be employed by the reader in making his higher-level contextualisation efforts. L2, together with L1, offers the reader a possible theme (theme 1): alternatives of L1 and L2 scenarios. Tapping into **Chineseness**⁶⁶⁸ or **mac/mic**, L3 and L4 ask two rhetorical questions, thereby effectively setting the tone of sadness for the poem. Depending on the availability of further information, this sadness may be supportive to theme 1. L5, however, provides a twist against the rhetorical questions in L3 and L4, creating reader expectation for a different answer in the following line(s). L6 uses a vividly suggestive image of “a branchful of reed leaves facing the wind”, where the strange collocation of 一枝 and 蘆葉 is conducive to enhanced unfamiliarity, to create further reader expectation. Besides, L6 can be offering another possible theme (theme 2): an individual against the group/society/world/external forces. Looking backward, L1 and L2 can be construed as providing a contrasting pair that extends the vision to a vastness of space, characterised by “world” and “ocean”, so as to support a possible theme of “the group/society/world/external forces”. The build-up of L3-L6 is matched by the progressive enhancement of unfamiliarising effect in L7-L9 achievable through subverting what is appropriate to describe “a branchful of reed leaves”, itself a strange collocation, in a general reader’s **MiC**. This group of lines also present some possible responses of the poet/individual when faced with the two possible themes.

⁶⁶⁸ It should be pointed out that Chineseness is a major constituent of the **MiC** of a Chinese general reader, which is the cognitive basis for confronting the poem. As such, it may be claimed that many of the (un)familiarising effects are achieved through maneuvering of Chineseness, and sometimes it is quite impossible to clearly identify a meaningful unit as belonging to Chineseness or other constituents in the **MiC**, especially when there are, understandably, large areas of overlapping between the portion of Chineseness and those characterised by other, though less significant, types of constituents (such as, for the sake of argument, Englishness and Americanness).

On a closer look, however, the two possible themes are not considered *shiyi* maximisers. Theme 1, which refers to alternatives of L1 and L2 scenarios, can be construed as an individual facing a very important choice-making moment, which is even somewhat supported by L7-L9. Unfortunately, overall speaking, all the lines under a thematising attempt with theme 1 fail to coordinate and give rise to strong *shiyi*. The lines can be effective in describing the indecisiveness, for instance, of making the decision or facing the decision, but apart from this, there is not anything to add to truthfulness, which is the basis of *shiyi*. Similarly, with theme 2, which is an individual against the group/society/world/external forces, another unsuccessful thematisation attempt occurs.

Without a clear and appropriate theme as the *shiyi* maximiser, the “poem” is nothing more than a collection of unrelated images presented in, say, a poetic form structured by separate lines joined together as a piece of writing in the vertically downward direction on paper (such as that adopted by most of new poetry). On the other hand, some images, such as 一枝蘆葉臨風 (a branchful of reed leaves facing the wind), may be subtle, or suggestive (of potential enhancement of truthfulness through contextualisation attempts), on their own given a theme, but in the poem they are not functioning as organic components contributing to an overall increment of *shiyi*. And this is likely the case even if another possible theme is offered by further (external) contextualisation attempts. As such, the poem is meaningful (in terms of construction of a poetic world),⁶⁶⁹ subtle (in terms of openness to contextualisation and possible thematisation) but non-poetic (or *shiyi*-deficient, due to failure in thematisation), and can be regarded as a **bad poem** or **not a poem**.

⁶⁶⁹ In other words, **Type A unintelligibility** is ruled out.

(M11) Guo Moruo's 郭沫若 (1892-1978) "Lizai diqiu bianshang fanghao" 立在地球邊上放號 (Standing at the edge of the globe and roaring, 1921⁶⁷⁰):

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined
T	<p>立在地球邊上 (Standing at the edge of the globe):</p> <p>Already in the title there is <u>unfamiliarity in this collocation</u> of 立在 and 地球邊上, which probably draws the reader's immediate attention to what's to follow, though without giving too much information as to the theme of the poem.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p> <p>立在地球邊上放號 (Standing at the edge of the globe and roaring):</p> <p>There is another <u>collocation of unfamiliarity</u> (立在地球邊上 and 放號) to draw the reader's attention, though still not giving too much information as to the theme of the poem.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
1	<p>無數的 (Innumerable):</p> <p>This <u>exaggeration</u> serves a similar purpose of drawing the reader's attention, though without giving too much information as to the theme of the poem.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p> <p>白雲[...]怒湧 (white clouds are gushing and fluxing [...]):</p> <p>This is another <u>collocation of unfamiliarity</u> (白雲 and 怒湧) to draw the reader's attention, though falling short of giving any hint to the theme of the poem.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
2	<p>壯麗的北冰洋 (magnificent [...] Arctic Ocean):</p> <p>This <u>echoes</u> the vastness observed by the one standing at the edge of the earth as suggested in the title. The accumulation of images thus far fails to add up to something bigger than the very accumulation.</p> <p>(+CE) (FE)</p> <p>好[...]壯麗的[...]晴 (good [...] magnificent [...] fine):</p> <p>Against the background set out by previous lines, these are <u>positive terms</u> effective in setting a bright tone for the poetic world.</p>

⁶⁷⁰ For the original in Chinese, refer to Xie and Jiang 2010, 300. The poem is not dated, but as indicated in *ibid.*, 315, it was included in the poet's collection of poetry entitled *Nü Shen* 女神 (*The Goddess*) published in 1921.

	(+CE) (FE)
3	<p>無限的 (Boundless):</p> <p>This <u>exaggeration</u> serves a similar purpose of drawing the reader's attention, though without giving too much information as to the theme of the poem.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p> <p>太平洋 (Pacific Ocean):</p> <p>This continues to <u>echo</u> the vastness extended by standing at the edge of the earth suggested in the title.</p> <p>(+CE) (FE)</p> <p>太平洋提起他全身的力量來要把 (With all the might in his body the boundless Pacific Ocean tries to):</p> <p>This <u>personification/animation</u> vivifies the rotation of the earth.</p> <p>(UE)</p> <p>把地球推倒 (to push the globe over):</p> <p>This rotation of the earth, a <u>strange collocation</u> by itself, when construed as overturning the world/society/government, can be suggesting a theme of revolution.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p> <p>無限的太平洋提起他全身的力量來要把地球推倒 (With all the might in his body the boundless Pacific Ocean tries to push the globe over):</p> <p>This suggests a <u>strange scenario</u> in which one mighty force is trying to topple a huge object.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
4	<p>我眼前來了的滾滾的洪濤 (the big waves rolling over and reaching my eyes):</p> <p>This <u>exaggeration</u> of 眼前來了 (reaching my eyes) serves a similar purpose of drawing the reader's attention, though still without giving too much information as to the theme of the poem.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
5	<p>不斷的毀壞，不斷的創造，不斷的努力 (Continuously destroying, continuously creating, continuously striving):</p> <p>The <u>repetition</u> of 不斷的 (continuously) suggests the never-ceasing nature of the changing process characterised by destruction, creation and striving (for continuous improvement).</p> <p>(+CE) (FE) (UE)</p>
6	<p>力/哟！/力/哟！ (It's power! It's power!):</p> <p>The <u>repetition</u> of 力 (power) suggests that this power may be the focus of this poem.</p>

	(+CE) (FE)
7	[L7 and L8 should be discussed together as a dropped line.]
8	<p>力的[...]，力的[...]，力的[...]，力的[...]，力的[...] ([...] of power, [...] of power, [...] of power, [...] of power, [...] of power):</p> <p>The <u>repetition</u> of 力 (power) again suggests that this power may be the focus of the poem.</p> <p>(+CE) (FE)</p> <p>[...]繪畫，[...]舞蹈，[...]音樂，[...]詩歌，[...]Rhythm (Painting [...], dancing [...], music [...], poetry [...], rhythm [...]):</p> <p>Offering a bright view on 力 (power), these activities/forms are <u>positive terms</u> of artistic nature, roughly undergoing transformation from the more concrete to the more abstract. This route of transformation represents a shift towards “rhythm”, which appears in English in the original composed otherwise in Chinese to highlight its significance.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>

Analysis:

One of the poet's most famous poems, this simple, short piece of work can be contextualised, and thus interpreted (supported by instances of +CE throughout the poem, as well as in the title), without the need to identify references outside of a general reader's **MiC**, so it is a poem interpretable through **internal contextualisation**, though it is still unknown whether the poem can be considered poetic (in terms of *shiyi*) at this stage.⁶⁷¹ Therefore, initial contextualisation attempts have ruled out the existence of **Type A unintelligibility**, but not that of **Type B unintelligibility**.

Since successful thematisation is key to *shiyi* realisation, it is imperative to find out if some possible themes can be identified in the poem. However, no obvious themes have been identified so far, so further efforts have to be made in the following table:

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s)
T	立在地球邊上 (Standing at the edge of the globe)	+CE, UE	no theme

⁶⁷¹ As with some poems previously analysed in this chapter, there are not any noticeable references to the **mac/mic**.

	立在地球邊上放號 (Standing at the edge of the globe and roaring)	+CE, UE	no theme
1	無數的 (Innumerable)	+CE, UE	no theme
	白雲[...]怒湧 (white clouds are gushing and fluxing [...])	+CE, UE	no theme
2	壯麗的北冰洋 (magnificent [...] Arctic Ocean)	+CE, FE	no theme
	好[...]壯麗的[...]晴 (good [...] magnificent [...] fine)	+CE, FE	possible thematisation: a bright tone is set for the poetic world, which advises on the theme.
3	無限的 (Boundless)	+CE, UE	no theme
	太平洋 (Pacific Ocean)	+CE, FE	no theme
	太平洋提起他全身的力量來要把 (With all the might in his body the boundless Pacific Ocean tries to)	UE	no theme
	把地球推倒 (to push the globe over)	+CE, UE	<u>possible theme 1</u> : revolution
	無限的太平洋提起他全身的力量來要把地球推倒 (With all the might in his body the boundless Pacific Ocean tries to push the globe over)	+CE, UE	possible thematisation: pushing the globe over may suggest making advance through revolution, a possible theme.
4	我眼前來了的滾滾的洪濤 (the big waves rolling over and reaching my eyes)	+CE, UE	no theme
5	不斷的毀壞，不斷的創造，不斷的努力 (Continuously destroying, continuously creating, continuously striving)	+CE, FE, UE	possible thematisation: this may depict the process of a revolution, a possible theme identified above.
6	力/哟！/力/哟！ (It's power! It's power!)	+CE, FE	<u>possible theme 2</u> : power

7, 8 [L7 and L8 should be discussed together	力的[...]，力的[...]，力的[...]，力的[...]，力的[...]（[...] of power, [...] of power, [...] of power, [...] of power, [...] of power)	+CE, FE	<u>possible theme 2</u> : power
as a dropped line.]	[...]繪畫，[...]舞蹈，[...]音樂，[...]詩歌，[...]Rhythm (Painting [...], dancing [...], music [...], poetry [...], rhythm [...])	+CE, UE	no theme

The poem is open to various interpretations in the apparent absence of a very clear theme with which a reader can proceed with the thematising. However, as the repetition of *li* 力 in L3 (considered retrospectively after reading lines that follow) and L5-L8 suggests, a possible theme of (eulogising) this *li* or rather the actor/agent behind this *li* is not too far-fetched, just that what exactly the actor/agent refers to (say, revolution, the Chinese Communist Party or something else) is unknown. On the other hand, revolution can be another possible theme as suggested by L3. Thus, the interpretation problems particular to this poem are (1) whether *li* can itself be a theme that can maximise *shiyi*, and (2) whether another possible theme, i.e. revolution, can serve better as the *shiyi* maximiser.

As with all our analysis, the analysis here starts with (un)familiarising effect. Rhetorically speaking, (un)familiarising techniques have been utilised throughout the poem, including the title. It is noted that without an appropriate theme, the reader cannot succeed in making his higher-level contextualisation efforts a consistent endeavour through thematisation. Lower-level contextualisation efforts can still be made under such circumstances, thus the images are made sense of, mostly individually, but at most only tiny, separate **poetic contexts** (as compared to a whole poetic world) are created, which dissipates attention and reduces communicative effectiveness.

If, as suggested above, *li* is used as the maximiser, the thematisation is defective, as *li per se* is only subject to truth enhancement (for building a clearer or more concrete poetic world), not truthfulness enhancement (for *shiyi* derivation). Any “thematization” triggered by *li* as a “theme” is not real thematisation but merely lower-level contextualisation. If, alternatively, *li* is used as a **proxy** of the true maximiser, say a revolution, the thematisation is again defective, as a revolution can hardly be reduced to merely *li*. In other words, making *li* a proxy of a revolution

cannot significantly enhance, or can at most partially enhance, truthfulness of the real theme (and hence the level of *shiyi* of the poem). Since a theme is selected to maximise *shiyi*, it is still “a revolution” (i.e. without making *li* its proxy) that is the preferred theme among the two possible themes.

With “a revolution” in place as the theme, however, the poem is still far from good in terms of *shiyi*, with the collection of loosely related images which, though subtle individually (e.g. the expression “不斷的毀壞，不斷的創造，不斷的努力” [Continuously destroying, continuously creating, continuously striving] is subtle and suggestive of some improvement process that can result in enhancement of truthfulness *if* given a theme as a reference point/status quo that is subject to change) or collectively (L6-L8), only indirectly and insignificantly contributing to an overall increment of *shiyi*. And this is likely the case even if another possible theme posited through further (external) contextualisation attempts is used as the maximiser.

Following the above, the poem is considered meaningful (in terms of construction of a poetic world), so that **Type A unintelligibility** is ruled out. The poem can further be regarded as a poem of **subtlety** (in terms of openness to contextualisation and possible thematisation), though not poetic, suffering from **Type B unintelligibility** (due to half-success in thematisation) and lying closer to the unintelligibility end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum**.

(M12) Dai Wangshu’s 戴望舒 “Xiao Hong mupan kouzhan” 蕭紅墓畔口占 (Composing Offhandedly at Xiao Hong’s Grave, 1944⁶⁷²):

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined
T	蕭紅墓畔口占 (Composing Offhandedly at Xiao Hong’s Grave): This title, which informs on the incident, may be considered as introducing a possible theme of death. (+CE)
1	六小時[...]長途 (a long [...] route of six hours): This <u>emphasis</u> indicates how much time and effort was required to reach Xiao’s grave, suggesting how much the poet treasured the friendship between

⁶⁷² For the original in Chinese and year of composition, refer to Xie and Wu 2009, 30.

	<p>Xiao and him. (UE) (+CE) 寂寞的 (lonely): This may <u>echo</u> the possible theme of death. (FE)</p>
2	<p>頭邊 (by your head): This is written <u>as if</u> Xiao were alive then, thereby highlighting the poet's kind remembrance of her. (UE) 放 (lay down): This quick act <u>contrasts</u> with the long walk depicted in L1, making the reader further impressed with their friendship. (UE) (+CE)</p>
3	<p>我等待着 (I'm waiting): This indicates that the poet is waiting for something, thereby producing a <u>suspension</u>. (UE) (+CE) 長夜漫漫 (the night is [getting] long[er]): This <u>echoes</u> the long journey the poet has taken to reach there. (FE) (+CE)</p>
4	<p>卻 ([but]): Except creating a <u>contrast</u> with the previous line, this <u>echoes</u> and <u>reinforces</u> the contrast between the living and the dead. (+CE) (FE) (UE) 臥聽着 (lying [...] listen to): This suggests the dead is acting just like she were still living. (UE) (+CE) 閑話 (idle chatting): This serves as an <u>irony</u>, suggesting the idle chatting enjoyed by the deceased is even better than all kinds of noises in the world. (UE) (+CE)</p>
D	<p>一九四四年十一月二十日 (20th November 1944): This gives a time frame for the poem. (+CE)</p>

Analysis:

As the title suggests, this poem was written during the poet's visit to the grave of Xiao

Hong.⁶⁷³ This poem can be contextualised, and thus interpreted (supported by instances of +CE in T, L1-4 and date line), without requiring a general reader to turn to references outside of his **MiC**, so it is a poem interpretable through **internal contextualisation**. Besides, with a possible theme of death, it is possible, even on initial attempts, to thematise the poem. As such, **Type A unintelligibility** can be ruled out at this stage, and the poem can be regarded as a poem of subtlety to some degree. It should be noticed that +CE is there to represent success in constructing a poetic world by enhancing a reader's understanding of that world, not that to imply any natural/automatic realisation of *shiyi*.

On the other hand, with the theme of death taken as a *shiyi* maximiser, the reader is supposed to be facilitated in making significant sense out of the poem along with the directions of some serious existential concerns through thematising, as can be done according to the process recorded in the following table:

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s)
T	蕭紅墓畔口占 (Composing Offhandedly at Xiao Hong's Grave)	+CE	<u>possible theme</u> : death
1	六小時[...]長途 (a long [...] route of six hours)	UE +CE	長途: theme-familiarising
	寂寞的 (lonely)	FE	寂寞: theme-familiarising
2	頭邊 (by your head)	UE	頭邊: theme-unfamiliarising
	放 (lay down)	UE +CE	no theme
3	我等待着 (I'm waiting)	UE +CE	我等待着: theme-familiarising
	長夜漫漫 (the night is [getting] long[er])	FE +CE	長夜漫漫: theme-familiarising
4	卻 ([but])	+CE FE UE	no theme

⁶⁷³ Xiao Hong died on 22 Jan 1942 in Hong Kong, then under occupation by the Japanese invaders. See Ge 2011, 118.

	臥聽着 (lying [...] listen to)	UE +CE	臥聽着: theme-unfamiliarising
	閑話 (idle chatting) (FE + UE → + CE)	UE +CE	no theme
D	一九四四年十一月二十日 (20th November 1944)	+CE	no theme

From the above table, it is clear that with “death” as the theme, some meaningful units in the poem, such as 長途 and 寂寞 in L1 and 我等待着 and 長夜漫漫 in L3, are theme-familiarising, in that these terms/expressions can all be used to describe a man’s journey towards death, the final destination of everyone. Being **theme-familiarising** means these meaningful units are more than merely familiarising, and can be thematised to enrich a reader’s understanding of the theme. Besides, such understanding can also be enhanced through unfamiliarisation by means of theme-unfamiliarising units such as 頭邊 in L2 and 臥聽着 in L4. Essentially, the portrayal of Xiao as if she were living and lying down while listening to water waves is effective in blurring the line between the living and the dead. It seems that, after all, death is not that unimaginable and frightening, when one is so often faced with all difficulties in life. At first, it takes the poet some hours of walk to reach the grave, just the other side of death. But then, he soon realises that the divide between Xiao and himself is not that distinct. He seems to be able to fully communicate with her, or at least sees and understands what she is doing. The dead one is described as rather enjoying herself in a leisurely manner, while the living one is the one who has taken all the troubles to reach the destination. All these descriptions help illuminate on the reader’s understanding of (life and) death. It is in this sense that the poem is perceived as poetic, or rich in *shiyi*. A point to note is that even if the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong is not taken into account by refraining from studying the history for some external contextualisation attempts (i.e. with reference to information outside of **MiC**), a general reader can still see the poem as poetic. Besides, as in some of the poems analysed, not any noticeable references to the **mac/mic** have been detected in this poem, though this does not seem to have any adverse effect on the *shiyi* derived.

Following the above analysis, the poem is meaningful (in terms of construction of the poetic world), subtle (in terms of its openness to possible thematisation) and can be regarded as a **good poem** lying closer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** considering the successful thematisation described above.

(M13) Luo Fu's 洛夫 "Yinwei feng de yuangu" 因為風的緣故 (Because of the Wind, 1981⁶⁷⁴):

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation (in bold) and their relevance, with (Un)familiarising Techniques underlined
T	因為風的緣故 (Because of the Wind): This suggests a possible theme of wind, which should be a proxy for something else yet unknown to the reader. A <u>suspension</u> is created as to what wind refers to, and what it is affecting. (+CE) (UE)
S1 1	昨日我沿着河岸 (Yesterday, along the bank of river, I): This lays down the time, the main character, as well as the place for the poetic world. (+CE)
2	到 (to): A <u>suspension</u> is created as to where the poet is heading. (UE)
3	彎腰喝水的地方 (Where [...] bent over to drink water): This suggests one is taking a rest in a journey. (UE) (+CE)
4	請煙囪 (asked the chimney): The chimney is <u>personified</u> as to be able to respond to a request. A <u>suspension</u> is again created as to what the request is. (UE)
5	寫一封長長的信 (To write [...] a very long letter): This <u>echoes</u> the previous line, spells out the request, and creates another <u>suspension</u> as to what the message in the letter is. (FE) (+CE) (UE)
6	潦草 (illegible): This makes a <u>twist</u> , turning the otherwise romantic atmosphere into something more practical and amusing. (UE)

⁶⁷⁴ For the original in Chinese, refer to Xie and Wang 2009, 548. For year of composition, see Luo Fu 2010, 109.

7	<p>心意 (heart and mind):</p> <p>This makes a <u>twist</u>, emphasising what is the significant message in the letter.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
8	<p>明亮亦如[...]燭光 (as bright as the candlelight):</p> <p>This, which is used to characterise 心意 in the previous line, <u>contrasts</u> with the letter's being illegible as described in L6.</p> <p>(UE)</p> <p>你窗前的燭光 (the candlelight facing your window):</p> <p>This further depicts the poetic world.</p> <p>(+CE)</p>
9	<p>曖昧 (vagueness):</p> <p>This introduces some <u>reservation</u>, in contrast with the straightforwardness expressed in the previous lines.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
10	<p>勢所難免 (It was simply unavoidable):</p> <p>This assertiveness offers another <u>twist</u> to raise a <u>suspension</u>.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
11	<p>因為風的緣故 (Because of the Wind):</p> <p>This <u>echoes</u> the title, and further creates a <u>suspension</u> as to what wind refers to.</p> <p>(FE)(UE)</p>
S2 12	<p>能否看懂並不重要 (Whether you understand [...] is nothing important):</p> <p>This offers another <u>twist</u> to raise a <u>suspension</u>.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
13	<p>重要的是 (What's important is):</p> <p>This serves to strengthen the <u>suspension</u>.</p> <p>(UE)</p>
14	<p>在雛菊尚未全部凋零之前 (What's important is):</p> <p>This easily reminds a general reader of a <u>Chinese saying</u> <i>huakai kanzhe zhixu zhe, modai wuhua kong zhezhi</i> 花開堪折直須折，莫待無花空折枝 (which can arguably be rendered as “Gather ye rosebuds while ye may”),⁶⁷⁵ which encourages one to make opportune moves especially in a love affair.</p> <p>(FE)</p>

⁶⁷⁵ This comes from a famous Tang poem entitled *Jinliuyi* 金縷衣 (i.e. very precious and expensive garment made in golden threads) and attributed to Du Qiuming 杜秋娘, which reads “勸君莫惜金縷衣，勸君惜取少年時。花開堪折直須折，莫待無花空折枝。” As cited in Li Xing and Li Miao 2009, 238.

15	<p>趕快 (Hurry up):</p> <p>This <u>echoes</u> the previous line.</p> <p>(FE)</p> <p>發怒，或者發笑 (show your anger, or your smile):</p> <p>This urges the addressee to give response, no matter what response it is, which <u>highlights</u> the poet's eagerness for her response. Besides, an allusion can be made by a general reader to a Chinese expression <i>yi pin yi xiao</i> 一顰一笑 (literally every instance of knitting the brows and smiling), which generalises all kinds of emotions of a lady.</p> <p>(UE) (FE)</p>
16	<p>趕快 (Hurry up):</p> <p>This <u>echoes</u> the previous line.</p> <p>(FE)</p> <p>我那件薄衫子 (my thin shirt):</p> <p>This tells us the two are already in an intimate relationship.</p> <p>(+CE)</p>
17	<p>趕快 (Hurry up):</p> <p>This <u>echoes</u> the previous line.</p> <p>(FE)</p> <p>又黑又柔的嫵媚 (charming [hair] so black and soft):</p> <p>This suggests her hair is still black, and her age still young. The use of <u>metonymy</u> by saying 又黑又柔 instead of hair, as well as the use of <u>hypocatastasis</u> (or implied metaphor) by saying charming instead of hair, enhances the subtlety of beauty.</p> <p>(+CE) (UE)</p>
18	<p>整生的 (of whole life):</p> <p>This <u>echoes</u> the black hair in the previous line, probably <u>implying</u> a whole life from black hair to white hair.</p> <p>(UE)</p> <p>愛 (love):</p> <p>The build up from L13 to L17 has reached to this introduction of love, another possible theme of the poem.</p> <p>(+CE)</p>
19	<p>一盞燈 (a lamp):</p> <p>一盞燈 is <u>contrasted</u> with 整生的愛 in the previous line, suggesting that it is very difficult and time-consuming to burn a fire of love. 一盞 can further <u>imply</u> loyalty.</p> <p>(UE)</p>

20	火 (a fire): This use of <u>metaphor</u> echoes 燭光 in L8. (UE) (FE)
21	隨時可能熄滅 ([...] can extinguish at any time): This extends the analogy further, and creates a <u>suspension</u> . (UE)
22	因為風的緣故 (Because of the Wind): This <u>echoes</u> the title, and further creates a <u>suspension</u> as to what wind refers to. (FE)(UE)

Analysis:

From the above table, wind and love can be two possible themes of this poem. Besides, it is noted that this poem can be contextualised, and thus interpreted (supported by instances of +CE in T, L1, L3, L5, L8, and L16-L18), without relying much on references outside of a general reader's **MiC**, so it is a poem interpretable through **internal contextualisation**. The widespread presence of +CE in this poem represents the poet's delicate skilfulness in constructing a poetic world through enhancing a reader's understanding of that world, which is the foundation for producing *shiyi*. In this poem, only two references, i.e. *chujū* 雛菊 (daisies) in L14 and 發怒, 或者發笑 (show your anger, or your smile) in L15, are found to be constituents in the **mac/mic**. However, as seen from the above analysis, the use of these constituents is quite limited as far as the derivation of *shiyi* is concerned.

Given two possible themes as identified, initial attempts to thematise the poem cannot be too fruitful because of possible dissipation of processing effort. Thus, at this stage, only **Type A unintelligibility** can be ruled out. More contextualisation attempts have to be made along the depth dimension accordingly, as shown in the table below:

Lines of poem	Clues to Interpretation	Effects	Theme(s)
T	因為風的緣故 (Because of the Wind)	+CE UE	<u>possible theme</u> : wind
1	昨日我沿着河岸 (Yesterday, along the bank of river, I)	+CE	no theme

2	到 (to)	UE	no theme
3	彎腰喝水的地方 (Where [...] bent over to drink water)	UE +CE	彎腰喝水的地方: theme-familiarising (if theme = love)
4	請煙囪 (asked the chimney)	UE	no theme
5	寫一封長長的信 (To write [...] a very long letter)	FE +CE UE	no theme
6	潦草 (illegible)	UE	no theme
7	心意 (heart and mind)	UE	心意: theme-familiarising (if theme = love)
8	明亮亦如[...]燭光 (as bright as the candlelight)	UE	明亮亦如[...]燭光: theme-familiarising (if theme = love)
	你窗前的燭光 (the candlelight facing your window)	+CE	no theme
9	曖昧 (vagueness)	UE	曖昧: theme-familiarising (if theme = love)
10	勢所難免 (It was simply unavoidable)	UE	勢所難免: theme-unfamiliarising (if theme = love)
11	因為風的緣故 (Because of the Wind)	FE UE	<u>possible theme</u> : wind
S2 12	能否看懂並不重要 (Whether you understand [...] is nothing important)	UE	能否看懂並不重要: theme-unfamiliarising (if theme = love)
13	重要的是 (What's important is)	UE	no theme
14	在雛菊尚未全部凋零之前 (What's important is)	FE	在雛菊尚未全部凋零之前: theme-familiarising (if theme = love)
15	趕快 (Hurry up)	FE	趕快: theme-familiarising (if theme = love)
	發怒，或者發笑 (show your anger, or your smile)	UE FE	發怒，或者發笑: theme-unfamiliarising (if theme = love)
16	趕快 (Hurry up)		趕快: theme-familiarising (if theme = love)

	我那件薄衫子 (my thin shirt): This tells us the two are already in an intimate relationship.	+CE	no theme
17	趕快 (Hurry up)	FE	趕快: theme-familiarising (if theme = love)
	又黑又柔的嫵媚 (charming [hair] so black and soft)	+CE UE	no theme
18	整生的 (of whole life)	UE	整生的: theme-familiarising (if theme = love)
	愛 (love)	+CE	another <u>possible theme</u> : love
19	一盞燈 (a lamp)	UE	一盞燈: theme-familiarising (if theme = love)
20	火 (a fire)	UE FE	火: theme-familiarising (if theme = love)
21	隨時可能熄滅 ([...] can extinguish at any time)	UE	隨時可能熄滅: theme-familiarising (if theme = love)
22	因為風的緣故 (Because of the Wind)	FE UE	<u>possible theme</u> : wind 因為風的緣故 (Because of the Wind) : theme-unfamiliarising (if theme = love)

As for the issue on theme, it is suggested, from thematisation attempts in the above (second) table, that of the two possible themes, love is the more appropriate *shiyi* maximiser in the poem, which can accordingly be considered a piece of beautifully written vignette on love.

From the above table, it is clear that with “love” as the theme, some meaningful units in the poem, such as 彎腰喝水的地方 in L3, 心意 in L7, 明亮亦如[...]燭光 in L8, 曖昧 in L9, 在雛菊尚未全部凋零之前 in L14, 趕快 in L15-L17, 整生的 in L18, 一盞燈 in L19, 火 in L20 and 隨時可能熄滅 in L21, are theme-familiarising, in that these terms can all be used to characterise love. Being theme-familiarising means these meaningful units are more than merely familiarising, and can be thematised to enrich our understanding of the theme. In addition, such understanding is also enhanced through unfamiliarisation by means of theme-unfamiliarising units such as 勢所難免 in L10, 能否看懂並不重要 in L12, 發怒, 或者發笑 in L15 and 因為風的緣故 in L22. Essentially, the wind, which

was earlier considered a possible theme, should be regarded as the major unfamiliarising unit in the poem, whose effect on the theme can be analysed as follows. First, it is because of the wind, 曖昧 (vagueness) is 勢所難免 (It was simply unavoidable) (L9-L11). Moreover, it is also owing to this wind that 火 (fire [of love]) 隨時可能熄滅 ([...] can extinguish at any time) (L20-L22). Through the poem, the poet chooses to highlight the capricious nature of love, which is usually neglected by other writers. Others may describe love as subject to examinations and temptations, but Luo Fu stresses the naturalness of this capriciousness, which enhances a reader's understanding of actual love. It is in this sense that the poem is perceived as especially poetic (in terms of *shiyi*).

Following the above analysis, the poem is meaningful, subtle and can be regarded as a **good poem** (in terms of *shiyi*) lying closer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum**.

4.3 FINDINGS:

In the analysis section, a total of 13 new poems (**M1-M13**) were analysed according to the proposed framework. The new poems selected were all analysed by means of two tables, for first-level contextualisation and higher-level contextualisation (i.e. thematisation) respectively.

It should be pointed out that if the *shiyi* as confirmed by the framework generally agrees with what is perceived by the reader, and the analysis made according to the framework is logical and convincing, then it is reasonably justifiable to accept the framework as valid. In the following, findings of the analysis, especially in respect of the derivation of *shiyi*, are presented in the order of poems as they were analysed, with particular emphasis placed on insights (which are underlined) gained from the process. Such insights, if incorporated as appropriate into the revised hypothesis, are supposed to further improve and strengthen its validity and applicability.

In our analysis of Zhu Xiang's "Dang pu" (**M1**), **(un)familiarity** is given prominent coverage, with a view to working out how this can be applied in practice. After assessment of the possible themes, it is suggested that if the identified theme is actually not quite different from what is literally described in the poem, any (un)familiarisation attempts during the second-level contextualisation process will not result in too much enhanced truthfulness, and hence improvement in *shiyi* will be

quite limited. This is significant because the resulting *shiyi* will be used to justify if the identified theme concerned should have been adopted in the first place. Besides, it is found that the actual significance of the **macro/micro-context** in interpretation of new poetry is, as implied in RA2, quite small. As such, the *shiyi* derived from reading of the poem is more related to the **Micro-context** and the **Overlapping Area** than the **micro-context** and the **overlapping area**. The analysis concluded that the poem can be regarded as a **good poem** (in terms of *shiyi*, as in the analysis of all other poems) lying closer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** (i.e. still suffering from a low degree of **Type B unintelligibility**).

Except for testing the validity of the proposed framework in accounting for derivation of *shiyi*, in our analysis of Bian Zhilin's "Duan zhang" (**M2**), the focus was on how a theme could be identified. Owing to the eye-catching title, it was first assumed that "fragments" was the theme. Analysis that followed turned out to favour a combination of fragments and interrelatedness (i.e. an opposite pair), which underscores the fact that in some cases it is difficult to identify a single theme. Instead, sometimes it is more feasible to define the theme in terms of a pair of related keywords prescribing a range of concepts. Similar to the case of **M1**, it is suggested that the actual significance of the **macro/micro-context** in interpretation of this poem is quite small. As such, the *shiyi* derived from reading of the poem is more related to the **Micro-context** and the **Overlapping Area** than the **micro-context** and the **overlapping area**. To conclude, Bian's poem can also be regarded as a **good poem**, which is situated closer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum**.

Following our analysis of Wen Yiduo's "Xintiao" (**M3**), it is suggested that his poem can be regarded as a **good poem** lying closer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum**. It is found that there is one reference (*xin* 心 in T, L14 and L28) to **Chineseness**, or the **overlapping area**, but such a reference is not considered very significant to *shiyi* derivation in this poem. What is of particular interest is the finding that a theme need not necessarily be the existential concern regarding which a reader develops an enhanced understanding. As in Wen's case, the theme which allows successful thematisation is "silence", but what is enhanced is the reader's understanding of "conscience" (or awareness of truthfulness). Accordingly, the framework has to be adjusted to incorporate similar possibilities of having separate objects of theme and enhanced understanding/truthfulness.

In our analysis of Xu Zhimo's "Liangge yueliang" (**M4**), it emerged that similar

to Wen Yiduo's "Xintiao", whose theme is not exactly the object of enhanced understanding, Xu's poem adopts the moon as a device to sharpen the reader's understanding of the real theme, the ideal. This definitely calls for adjustment to the revised hypothesis so as to accommodate the use of an identified theme to the benefit of another object in terms of knowledge/truthfulness enhancement. Besides, it is noted that, of a plethora of images adopted in the poem, only three references are traced to **Chineseness** (i.e. *yue* 月 in T, L1, etc., *tengluo* 藤蘿 in L10 and *yur* 魚兒 in L12). But such a proportion, as well as their actual contribution, has confirmed that reliance on the **overlapping area** is not very useful in the realisation of *shiyi* in the poem. Overall speaking, Xu's poem can still be regarded as a **good poem** lying nearer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum**.

Dai Wangshu's "Woyong cansun de shouzhang" (M5) was analysed to specifically work out a simple rule for the identification of theme-(un)familiarising units in a poem: all those contributing to familiarity of the theme concerned can be regarded as theme-familiarising, while all those deviating from the theme concerned can be regarded as theme-unfamiliarising. It is noted, however, that many units in the poem as identified remain thematisation-neutral. This is probably due to the fact that these units mainly serve to provide +CE for constructing the poetic world. Even though they do not participate directly in thematisation, they have provided a solid background for thematisation to occur. It is also noted that *liu* 柳 in L7 can be regarded as reference to the **macro/micro-context**, but the *shiyi* derived from the poem is not too much dependent on this image. Overall speaking, Dai's poem can be regarded as a **good poem** lying nearer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum**.

Analysis of Yu Guangzhong's "Xiang chou" (M6) suggests that the poem can be regarded as a **good poem** lying nearer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum**. One interesting point to note is that when taken together, L1, L5, L9 and L13 form a group of lines informing the reader of a full life cycle including stages of the youth, the adult and the aged, thus delivering enhanced cognitive effect, which further helps to reveal the nature of nostalgia (the theme), that it is perhaps haunting us all our life. Such revelation or familiarisation of nostalgia of course further improves *shiyi* of the poem, but only subject to additional processing effort expended subsequent to on-line reading. Besides, in doing his part of concretisation of nostalgia through thematisation, the reader is likely to improve his self-understanding (also part of the overall truthfulness), by enhancing his understanding of certain universal human sentiments. As to the effect of the

poem's structural flexibility (varied lengths of the poem lines) and melodic effect, etc. on *shiyi* enhancement, it is found to be not at all significant. This has substantiated the position of the proposed framework to downplay the significance of prosodic devices to the creation of *shiyi*. Regarding the images employed, it is found that all can be referred to the **Overlapping Area**.

Gu Cheng's "Yidairen" (M7), of just two lines, is one of the shortest pieces of poetic works ever written, and the shortest analysed in this thesis. This surely provides a chance to test if the revised hypothesis can accommodate poetry of this length. As pointed out in the analysis, the poem is a **good poem** lying nearer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum**. According to the framework, the *shiyi* can be accounted for by investigating how the poem is thematised. It was shown that with fate as the theme, *shiyi* was produced. But it was when the title was also given its due weight in interpretation that the *shiyi* was maximised. This reminds one that in thematisation, the title should be involved as well as the lines in a poem. It should be pointed out that, although there seems to have no particular reference to the **macro/micro-context** (whether the classical one, or any new one established for new poetry *tradition*, if any) except for the cultural reference of *Yidairen* 一代人 to the Cultural Revolution, this cultural reference is most vital to the interpretation of the poem based on the theme as identified. As such, knowledge of the **macro/micro-context** seems to be indispensable for derivation of a high level of *shiyi* in this poem.

In the analysis of Gu Cheng's "Yuan he jin" (M8), Michelle Yeh's method was compared and contrasted with ours. It was shown that Yeh's method was effective in appreciation, but her approach is more of an ingenious commentary rather than a reproducible methodology. By contrast, the proposed framework is able to account for the production of *shiyi*, which is properly defined, and the analysis conducted by means of a two-level contextualisation mechanism is endowed with reproducibility, as evidenced by the analysis of all 13 poems in this chapter. It is also noted that for interpretation of this poem, only knowledge from the **Overlapping Area** is required. Following the analysis by the proposed framework, the poem can be regarded as a **good poem** lying nearer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum**.

In the analysis of Zheng Chouyu's "Cuo wu" (M9), it was suggested that in the case of L3,⁶⁷⁶ where the faces are compared to the flowers, the faces (representing the

⁶⁷⁶ L3 reads 如蓮花的開落 ([...] like lotus flowers having their bloom and doom).

women) are said to be (un)familiarised in our jargon, and whether it is familiarisation or unfamiliarisation depends on the relative familiarity of the meaningful units (i.e. women and flowers) in the particular reader's Micro-context. What is clear is that it is “the flowers” that provides the effect, whether it is familiarising or unfamiliarising. (Un)familiarisation, now known as a *relative concept*, is thus given a clearer characterisation. Besides, inter/intra-line contextualisation has been explained in detail. It is noted that there are three references to **Chineseness**, including *jiangnan* 江南 in L1, *dongfeng* 東風 in L4, *jimo de cheng* 寂寞的城 in L5, so that knowledge of **macro/micro-context** contributes, though not considerably, to realisation of *shiyi* in this poem. It was concluded that the poem can be regarded as a **good poem** lying nearer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum**.

In the case of Tian Han's “Ye” (M10), a clear theme had not emerged upon completion of the first-level contextualisation, and a good chance was provided for discussing how a theme can be identified. The identification of theme is extremely important because without a clear and appropriate theme as the maximiser of *shiyi*, the “poem” is nothing more than a collection of unrelated images presented in, say, a poetic form. Besides, it is noted that, tapping into **Chineseness**, L3 and L4 ask two rhetorical questions with the keywords *qiqi* 淒淒 and *youyou* 悠悠 respectively, thereby effectively setting the tone of sadness for the poem. Such references to the **macro/micro-context**, however, are not considered to have achieved a lot in terms of *shiyi* derivation. The analysis at last concluded that Tian's poem is **meaningful** (in terms of construction of a poetic world), **subtle** (in terms of openness to contextualisation and possible thematisation) but non-poetic (or *shiyi*-deficient, due to failure in thematisation), and can be regarded as a **bad poem** or **not a poem**.

As for Guo Moruo's “Lizai diqiu bianshang fanghao” (M11), it was not possible to identify any convincing theme upon completion of first-level contextualisation, even though the poem is interpretable through internal contextualisation without making reference to constituents out of the Micro-context. In the absence of a theme, lower-level contextualisation efforts can still be made, thus the images are made sense of, mostly individually, but at most only tiny, separate poetic contexts are created, which dissipates attention and reduces communicative effectiveness. As such, the poem is considered meaningful (so that **Type A unintelligibility** is ruled out), **subtle, not poetic**, suffering from **Type B unintelligibility** (due to half-success in thematisation) and lying closer to the unintelligibility end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum**. This suggests that given a serious **Type B**

unintelligibility problem, even a poem with a high level of subtlety will still be placed closer to the unintelligibility end of the continuum.

According to the analysis of Dai Wangshu's "Xiao Hong mupan kouzhan" (M12) and Luo Fu's "Yinwei feng de yuangu" (M13), both poems are **meaningful, subtle** and can be regarded as a **good poem** lying closer to the subtlety end of the **subtlety-unintelligibility continuum** considering the successful thematisation exercises conducted. For M12, all references are made to the **Micro-context**, but for M13, *chujū* 雛菊 in L14 and *fanu* [...] *faxiao* 發怒[...]發笑 in L15 are considered references to **Chineseness**, which highlights the significance (though of a low level) of knowledge of the **macro/micro-context** to interpretation (as well as *shiyi* production) of this poem.

4.4 SUMMARY:

It is observed that of the **13** poems analysed, as many as **6** poems (i.e. **M1, M2, M6, M8, M11** and **M12**) do not seem to have any particular reference to the **overlapping area**. And for those (including M3, M4, M5, M7, M9, M10 and M13) which have made reference to the **macro/micro-context**, only the reference in M7 has a comparatively significant effect on *shiyi* derivation. This is understandable, as **RA1** (The Common Cultural-literary Macro-context Argument) is supposed to apply to classical poetry (and the significance of the overlapping area concerned to interpretation of classical poetry is assumed and also supported by our discussion of poems of Li Shangyin and Liu Zongyuan in the last chapter). Thus, it is suggested that many new poets have *not* neglected or ignored the significance of (use of) the the common area, just that the common area they have made use of cannot be restricted to that **overlapping area** between the cultural-literary micro-context of a general reader and its corresponding macro-context. In this regard, attention should now be turned to the **Overlapping Area** between the Micro-context of a general reader and its corresponding Macro-context, given that most of the meaningful units are referred back to this Area. With this revision, however, the validity of the use of the subtlety-unintelligibility continuum in our analysis will not be compromised.

Besides, of the 13 poems analysed, it is noted that **11** poems can be regarded as good poems, and **2** poems can be regarded as not poetic or not a poem.⁶⁷⁷ This result

⁶⁷⁷ According to the analysis, Tian Han's "Ye" (M10) is a bad poem or not a poem, and Guo Moruo's "Lizai diqiu bianshang fanghao" (M11) is not poetic.

has a significant implication to the revised hypothesis, especially **RA2**. According to **RA2** (The Subtlety-unintelligibility Continuum Argument), it is more likely to identify in new poetry a degree of unintelligibility *owing to* the assumption that “most writers of modern poetry have neglected or ignored the significance of (use of) the common overlapping area”. Such negligence or ignorance is somewhat supported by the observation that most of these poems (12 poems out of a total of 13 analysed) have no such noticeable use of the overlapping area (as suggested in the last paragraph). However, most of the new poems surveyed are still found to be *shiyi*-rich in varying degrees, and all of them are meaningful, with only two poems (**M10** and **M11**) suffering from Type B unintelligibility. Therefore, it is more likely that familiarity, the basis of derivation of *shiyi*, is built up on the **Overlapping Area** instead. This confirms what is suggested in the last paragraph, which is the **Overlapping Area** should be the focus of our attention as far as interpretation of new poetry is concerned.

Specifically, the proportion of “knowledge of the Chinese literary and cultural tradition” in Chineseness in RA4 should be reduced as far as interpretation of new poetry is concerned, which is commensurate with the reduced *significance* of the cultural-literary micro-context to the interpretation of new poetry, because according to the analysis an individual reader of modern poetry can still derive *shiyi* from a new poem even when most of the references are made to the **Overlapping Area** rather than the **overlapping area**. It can now be assumed that the continuum is still operational, but meaningfulness is more based on familiarity to the less restrictive **Overlapping Area**, which is a sufficient concept by itself to account for Type A unintelligibility. The definition of Chineseness should accordingly be revised from “the embodiment of the overlapping area of the cultural-literary micro/macro-context where the general reader can find anchorage of clues to meanings” (n.562), which is too narrow-based, to a more encompassing Chineseness defined as “the characteristics of being Chinese in the Chinese community concerned” (which is also less restrictive when compared to the Chineseness preliminarily defined as “the characteristics of the culture of a community of Chinese-speaking people” (n.117) in Chapter 1).

As to **prosody**, it is confirmed by the observation that the prosody of all poems analysed does not seem to have any direct enhancement effect on *shiyi*. It is true that prosody could more or less strengthen (un)familiarity, which however does not necessarily contribute to *shiyi*. Provided that the imagery in a poem is strong enough to create *shiyi* (such as the moon imagery in Xu Zhimo’s **M4**), prosody which is

contributory to (un)familiarity of a poem is still recommended, but as its effect is quite restricted and largely supportive, its main role may not be better than just the icing on the cake. It is apparent that all poems analysed are to a certain extent **subtle**, so as to be able to produce (un)familiarising effect during the first-level contextualisation process. However, as suggested in the revised hypothesis in Chapter 3, and explicated in the analysis in this chapter, meaningful units responsible for such (un)familiarising effect during the first-level contextualisation process merely open up the poem for possible thematisation (or higher-level contextualisation), and there is no guarantee that this thematisation will always produce desirable or any *shiyi*. In this regard, the subtlety-unintelligibility continuum should effectively be characterising a range from subtlety to **Type B unintelligibility** (rather than unintelligibility in general).

The above insights gained from the analysis, which should be considered for incorporation into the revised hypothesis where appropriate, are now listed below:

**Table 4.1: Insights from Analysis and
Suggested Amendments to the Revised Hypothesis**

Poem	Insight	Suggested Amendment to the Revised Hypothesis/Remark
M1	If the identified theme is actually not quite different from what is literally described in the poem, any (un)familiarisation attempts during the second-level contextualisation process will not result in too much enhanced truthfulness, and hence improvement in <i>shiyi</i> will be quite limited.	This can be incorporated into the framework for more effective application.
M2	Sometimes it is more feasible to define the theme in terms of a pair of related keywords prescribing a range of concepts.	It should be incorporated in the proposed hypothesis that in some cases it is not possible to identify a single concept as the theme.

M3	A theme need not necessarily be the existential concern regarding which a reader develops an enhanced understanding. Accordingly, the framework has to be adjusted to incorporate similar possibilities of having separate objects of theme and enhanced understanding/truthfulness.	It should be incorporated in the proposed hypothesis that a theme may in some case be a device for thematisation but not the object of enhanced understanding/truthfulness.
M4	Adjustment to the revised hypothesis is needed so as to accommodate the use of an identified theme to the benefit of another object in terms of knowledge/truthfulness enhancement.	-ditto-
M5	A simple rule for the identification of theme-(un)familiarising units in a poem: all those contributing to familiarity of the theme concerned can be regarded as theme-familiarising, while all those deviating from the theme concerned can be regarded as theme-unfamiliarising.	This rule can be incorporated into the framework for more effective application.
M6	In doing his part of concretisation through thematisation, the reader is likely to improve his self-understanding (also part of the overall truthfulness), by enhancing his understanding of certain universal human sentiments.	This “improvement of self-understanding” can be incorporated into the definition of <i>shiyi</i> .
	The position of the proposed framework to downplay the significance of prosodic devices to the creation of <i>shiyi</i> is substantiated.	NA
M7	As well as lines in a poem, the title should also be involved in thematisation.	This rule can be incorporated into the framework for more effective application.
M8	The proposed framework is able to account for the production of <i>shiyi</i> , which is properly defined, and the analysis conducted by means of a two-level	This supports the validity of the revised hypothesis.

	contextualisation mechanism is endowed with reproducibility.	
M9	Whether it is familiarisation or unfamiliarisation depends on the relative familiarity of the meaningful units in the particular reader's mind.	This rule can be incorporated into the framework for more effective application.
M10	Without a clear and appropriate theme as the maximiser of <i>shiyi</i> , the "poem" is nothing more than a collection of unrelated images presented in, say, a poetic form.	NA
M11	In the absence of a theme, lower-level contextualisation efforts can still be made, thus the images are made sense of, mostly individually, but at most only tiny, separate poetic contexts are created, which dissipates attention and reduces communicative effectiveness.	NA
M12	NA	NA
M13	NA	NA
Summary for poetry analysis	The continuum is still operational, but meaningfulness is more based on familiarity to the less restrictive Overlapping Area .	This should be reflected in RA2.
	The subtlety-unintelligibility continuum should effectively be characterising a range from subtlety to Type B unintelligibility (rather than unintelligibility in general).	This should be reflected in RA2.
	<u>The definition of Chineseness should be revised to a more encompassing Chineseness defined as "the characteristics of being Chinese in the Chinese community concerned".</u>	This should be reflected in RA4.

	<p><u>The proportion of “knowledge of the Chinese literary and cultural tradition” in Chineseness in RA4 should be reduced as far as interpretation of new poetry is concerned</u>, which is commensurate with the reduced <i>significance</i> of the cultural-literary micro-context to the interpretation of new poetry, because according to the analysis an individual reader of modern poetry can still derive <i>shiyi</i> from a new poem even when most of the references are made to the Overlapping Area rather than the overlapping area.</p>	<p>This should be reflected in RA4.</p>
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It should be noted that theoretically a few amendments have to be made mainly regarding the reduced significance of the cultural-literary micro-context in the hypothesis, but no operational weaknesses of the revised hypothesis have been identified in the analysis.

To conclude, the revised hypothesis proved to be effective in identifying which are good poems, and which are bad, with explanatory remarks and/or comments given, couched in the jargon developed over the first three chapters. Insights gained from the analysis above have been considered and are now duly incorporated (underlined and explained in footnotes) as follows.⁶⁷⁸

The Revised Arguments:

RA1 (The Common Cultural-literary Macro-context Argument):

It is argued that the classical Chinese poetry tradition has given rise to a common “cultural-literary macro-context” (which is part of a common Macro-context defined as a knowledge base comprising all kinds of available knowledge) from which an individual reader may, consciously or not, extract those relevant and related constituents and assimilate them into a cognitive

⁶⁷⁸ Since insights from M1, M5, M7 and M9 are related to actual applicability of the proposed framework, they are not represented in the revised arguments and definition of *shiyi*. Besides, RA3, which need not be revised, is not presented in the main text.

“cultural-literary micro-context” (which is part of the individual reader’s cognitive Micro-context, defined as a cognitive state of an individual, comprising all kinds of knowledge available to him) well before the commencement of reading of a classical poem new to the individual reader for its subsequent, effective interpretation through a “double-contextualisation” mechanism (comprising internal contextualisation and external contextualisation) geared to “poetic context” construction and thematisation through identified theme(s).⁶⁷⁹

RA2 (The Subtlety-unintelligibility Continuum Argument):

It is argued that a writer of Chinese⁶⁸⁰ poetry would be, in most cases, inclined to compose in a way taking full advantage of all possible nuances through manoeuvring his perceived common Overlapping Area between the “Macro-context” and the “Micro-context of the general reader”,⁶⁸¹ with a view to constructing a poetic context out of (un)familiarity to the Overlapping Area (hence avoiding Type A unintelligibility).⁶⁸² thus hopefully through thematising attempts based on some identified theme(s).⁶⁸³ contributing to *shiyi* whose likeliness of realisation is measured by subtlety in the subtlety-Type B⁶⁸⁴ unintelligibility continuum. Accordingly, a subtlety-Type B unintelligibility continuum is where all poems can be located with regard to their respective subtlety/unintelligibility.

RA4 (The Chineseness Argument):

It is argued that the poetic language of Chinese is characterised by “Chineseness”, which is the characteristics of being Chinese

⁶⁷⁹ This is to highlight the significance of themes in the process of thematisation according to insights from M1-M5.

⁶⁸⁰ This is revised according to insight from Summary.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid.

⁶⁸² Ibid.

⁶⁸³ This is also to highlight the significance of themes according to insights from M1-M5.

⁶⁸⁴ This, as well as the “Type B” in the next sentence, is added according to insight from Summary.

in the Chinese community concerned,⁶⁸⁵ and hence the indispensability, and significance, of “Chineseness” to Chinese literature/poetry.

The definition of *shiyi*:

Shiyi, which is characterised by a subtlety- Type B⁶⁸⁶ unintelligibility continuum where subtlety is the very measure of potential realisation of *shiyi*, is a sense of awareness of one’s immediate embrace of improved truthfulness (including that of self-understanding)⁶⁸⁷ derived from appreciation over a distance, and through thematising efforts along directions of existential concerns represented by some theme(s) (which need not be the actual object(s) of such enhanced truthfulness),⁶⁸⁸ of a poem’s (un)familiarisation techniques, whose (un)familiarising effect is enhanced through employment of Chineseness and traditional and/or familiar prosodic devices, all being constituents of (the common Overlapping Area between the Macro-context and)⁶⁸⁹ the Micro-context of⁶⁹⁰ the general reader in the Chinese community concerned.

From the above revisions, it should be noted that as far as the size of a knowledge base is concerned, the Overlapping Area should be larger than Chineseness, which in turn should now be larger than the overlapping area.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ This is to incorporate the insight from M6.

⁶⁸⁸ This is to incorporate the insights from M2-M4.

⁶⁸⁹ The brackets are added as, for all practical purposes, the Overlapping Area should exactly be equal to the Micro-context of the general reader. The use of “Overlapping Area” (and also “overlapping area”) is supposed to facilitate discussion when reference to the area which is “outside of the Micro-context but within the Macro-context” can simply be referred to as falling within the Overlapping Area (or the overlapping area as the case may be). Cf. also n.507 in this regard.

⁶⁹⁰ This is revised according to insight from Summary.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 REVIEW OF WORK DONE:

This thesis began with the **question of unintelligibility** of modern Chinese poetry in mind. The question is closely related to how modern poetry is compared with its classical counterpart, which is usually held in great regard artistically. Accordingly, this thesis intends to investigate the unintelligibility problem, with a view to justifying or refuting the propriety of attributing the poorer reception to new poetry to the alleged unintelligibility problem.

In Chapter 1, the alleged unintelligibility problem was put into its historical and theoretical perspective, a methodology based on a holistic approach was laid down, and a hypothesis was developed with reference to relevance theory, a pragmatic approach considered effective in solving the alleged unintelligibility problem. Central to the hypothesis are the 12 key terms (namely Macro/macro-context, Micro/micro-context, general reader, internal contextualisation, external contextualisation, subtlety, unintelligibility, familiarity, *shiyi*, prosodic devices, Chineseness and vernacular benefit) in six arguments formulated to support a proposed theory of *shiyi*. It was suggested that all those terms, then temporarily defined, would be redefined and/or modified, and the arguments further strengthened, in light of findings in the literature review in Chapter 2. It was contended that the two proposed basic concepts of “subtlety” and “unintelligibility”, plus their underlying “subtlety-unintelligibility” continuum constitutive of the proposed framework based on *shiyi* as hypothesised, would be able to account for the differences in reception to the two sub-genres in terms of *shiyi*.

In Chapter 2, a literature review was conducted to collate and analyse theories and/or approaches related to the unintelligibility problem, whose nature and resolution are considered the key to fully addressing the research problem. The literature review was divided into two main parts. The first part examines “the unintelligibility problem of modern Chinese poetry” (Section 2.2), and the second part covers some available “possible solutions” (Section 2.3) grounded in a number of disciplines. The “possible solutions” identified for perusal include those from Chinese language studies (Section 2.3.A), Chinese and Western poetics (Section 2.3.B), linguistics (Section 2.3.C), hermeneutics (Section 2.3.D) and previous research efforts in a similar direction as this thesis (Section 2.3.E). According to the

methodology identified earlier, similar and related concepts from different approaches and/or theories were selected for shaping the key terms and sharpening their definitions, for which 41 parameters were proposed as some guiding rules (Section 2.3.F). As the outcome of the literature review, these parameters duly incorporated the ideas/concepts of the theories and/or approaches identified and discussed, and would be used to rework the hypothesis in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3, the focus was on absorbing the parameters into the hypothesis, so as to achieve integration of the hypothesis with the identified approaches of poetics, pragmatics and hermeneutics, with a view to formulating a revised hypothesis for the purposes of this thesis. The parameters were grouped around the key terms, so as to be considered together for working out better definitions of the key terms. Thereafter, the arguments and proposed theory of *shiyi* were revisited and revised, so as to work out a revised hypothesis comprising a new theory of *shiyi* supported by four revised arguments (RA1 to RA4). In introducing the revised arguments, a few classical poems were discussed to illustrate viewpoints related to the classical sub-genre, as well as to prove that the hypothesis should also apply to this sub-genre.

In Chapter 4, 13 new poems were analysed according to the framework of the revised hypothesis. The analysis was supposed to be used for verifying the validity of the revised hypothesis, as well as to assess the poems. In practice, the framework proved to be effective in identifying which are good poems (11 out of 13 poems), and which are bad (2 poems: one is not poetic and one is a non-poem), with explanatory remarks/comments given, all couched in the jargon developed over the first three chapters. It was also noted that in most poems, reference was made to the Overlapping Area rather than the overlapping area, which necessitates further revision of the arguments. Other insights gained from the analysis were also considered and those useful for bringing theoretical and/or implementational improvement to the framework are duly incorporated into the latest version of the hypothesis. It should be emphasised that no serious theoretical weaknesses of the revised hypothesis had been identified in the analysis, and upon incorporation the insights were able to further improve the framework.

5.2 INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS:

The findings of the analysis in the previous chapter can be divided into two types: first, there are the general findings on poems, which were given when each poem was

analysed; and second, there are some insights gained from the analysis, which were presented in Table 4.1.

According to the general findings, 11 out of 13 poems analysed are considered poetic, and 2 poems are considered bad (one is not poetic and one is a non-poem). The percentage of good poems in all poems analysed is not that meaningful, as no formal sampling techniques have been employed for selection of representative poems. Qualitative comparison can still be made between poems analysed though. For instance, some of the poems analysed, including Zhu Xiang's "Dang pu" (M1), Bian Zhilin's "Duan zhang" (M2), Wen Yiduo's "Xintiao" (M3), Xu Zhimo's "Liangge yueliang" (M4), Dai Wangshu's "Woyong cansun de shouzhang" (M5), Yu Guangzhong's "Xiang chou" (M6), Gu Cheng's "Yidairen" (M7) and "Yuan he jin" (M8), Zheng Chouyu's "Cuo wu" (M9), Dai Wangshu's "Xiao Hong mupan kouzhan" (M12) and Luo Fu's "Yinwei feng de yuangu" (M13), can be regarded as good poems interpretable through internal contextualisation, as well as poetic. But for Tian Han's "Ye" (M10) and Guo Moruo's "Lizai diqiu bianshang fanghao" (M11), it is difficult to derive *shiyi* from the first, and difficult to attain a high level of *shiyi* from the second. Besides, the difficulty seems a permanent one as it is not possible to, through external contextualisation, have it overcome. Thus, these two poems can be said to have a permanent Type B unintelligibility problem.

As for the insights gained from the analysis, they represent some new realisation obtained from the process of analysis, or practical knowledge. It is found that most of poems surveyed are more or less *shiyi*-rich, a testimony that their writers have also paid attention to the use of the common area, though its scope should be expanded to that of the Overlapping Area. Accordingly, RA2 has to be revised, but the validity of the Subtlety-unintelligibility Continuum Argument has not been compromised. In addition, the proportion of knowledge of the "Chinese literary and cultural tradition" in Chineseness in RA4 should be reduced as far as interpretation of new poetry is concerned, which is commensurate with the reduced *significance* of the cultural-literary micro-context in the revised hypothesis, because it is now clear that an individual reader of modern poetry can still derive *shiyi* from a new poem even without the advantage that "a reader of classical poetry" can enjoy owing to his arguably larger cultural-literary micro-context. Besides, it is suggested that the subtlety-unintelligibility continuum should effectively be characterising a range from subtlety to **Type B unintelligibility** (rather than unintelligibility in general).

Despite all the above major revisions, it should be stressed that, if the *shiyi* as

confirmed by the framework generally agrees with what is perceived by the reader, and the analysis made according to the framework is logical and convincing, then it is reasonably justified to accept the framework as valid.

5.3 CONCLUSION:

With the revised hypothesis based on a revised theory of *shiyi* in place, the representative new poems were analysed to obtain a number of findings, which were fed back to the hypothesis for further revision. The applicability and consistence of the hypothesis in poetry analysis have basically confirmed its practical validity, and further revision based on the findings has helped ensure its improved theoretical validity. Such theoretical and practical validity of the revised hypothesis, however, can always be further strengthened by putting it to further tests through conducting more poetry analysis exercises in larger sampling sizes.

It is found that most modern poems analysed are regarded as poetic in terms of *shiyi*. Therefore, it is impossible to judge if the general reception to new poetry (arguably a *poorer* one as compared to the case of classical poetry) is justified or not. As far as M10 and M11 are concerned, however, since these two poems are recognised as the respective poets' masterpieces, it is not unreasonable to suggest that should modern poems generally be of a level of *shiyi* **similar to** or **lower than** that of M10 and M11, a poorer reception from the readers is justified. But the proportion of the two poems in our sample, as well as the small sampling size, cannot guarantee any justified generalisation of this particular finding to new poetry *in general*. Besides, a poor reception resulting from deficiency in *shiyi*, as in the case of the two poems, should not be considered as directly associated with "unintelligibility" *per se*, as both poems are found to be meaningful. Specifically, it is sometimes more justified to associate a poor reception to Type B unintelligibility (as in the case of M11), though not necessarily so (as in the case of M1, which is found to be poetic), but it is almost always justified to associate such a reception to Type A unintelligibility (probably except for those cases referred to on p.165 involving a sense of **unknownness** that is worshipped as a kind of unattainable higher truth). As such, it is *not* justified to attribute the poorer reception given to new poetry, itself justified or not, to a mere label of unintelligibility.

Returning to the two objectives of the thesis,⁶⁹¹ it can thus be concluded that

⁶⁹¹ They are stated in Chapter 1 as (1) to prove that the (revised) hypothesis based on *shiyi* is

both objectives have been achieved.

As for the value of this research, it is noted that we have conducted the poetry analysis by means of the revised hypothesis, which has proved its validity in differentiating good poems from bad ones and even non-poems in a systematic way. As such, the research is considered valuable in terms of the mechanism that it can offer for poetry appreciation. Besides, the mechanism can also be useful to a writer of poetry, because it can inform how a good poem or a bad one is interpreted, which can in turn be reflected or absorbed in reader expectations for consideration during the writing process. In addition, it is suggested that with the help of the hypothesis, works in the corpus of modern poetry can be verified to see if some pieces of the writings can be moved out from the corpus. It is expected that after the poem status of those remaining in the corpus has been confirmed, a fairer comparison between modern poetry and classical poetry can be made.

5.4 LIMITATIONS:

Except for limitations imposed by time constraints and the scope of the thesis, it is suggested that the validity of the conclusion in Section 5.3 may have been affected by any or all of the weaknesses as listed below:

1. No formal sampling methods have been employed to make the selection of poems analysed/discussed more representative of the two sub-genres, though it is noted that absolute objectivity is hardly possible in humanistic studies.⁶⁹²
2. As suggested earlier in Section 1.3.4 in Chapter 1, there are unavoidably constraints in the selection of poems for analysis in this thesis. For instance, despite literary or historical significance variously attributed to them, it is simply impractical, given the length of this thesis, for including some rather lengthy pieces, such as Guo Moruo's "Fenghuang niepan" of 394 lines, for analysis.

theoretically and practically valid for its intended purpose (i.e. investigation of the interpretation mechanism of modern Chinese poetry) by putting it and its corresponding theoretical framework to the test through systematically analysing a number of modern Chinese poems; and (2) to resolve the research problem, i.e. to justify or refute the propriety of attributing new poetry's poorer reception to the alleged unintelligibility problem.

⁶⁹² As suggested in Section 4.1, in making the selection of poems for analysis, a degree of subjectivity is unavoidable, and the best one can do is "declare interest" as much as possible.

3. As an extension to limitation No. 2, it is noted that a selection can be made from a canon when it comes to classical poetry, but it is often a difficult selection from a sea of new poetry where no particular canon has emerged so far. As such, the classical poetry selection is guaranteed with authoritative recognition, but the new poetry selection can be subject to criticisms from different parties of different views.⁶⁹³
4. It is noted that the general reader is a generalised concept supposed for minimising the discrepancies between actual individual readers, but each individual actually has his idiosyncratic Micro/micro-context. Technically speaking, therefore, assigning of +CE/UE/FE could sometimes be problematic or controversial, because it all depends on the individual responsible for doing the assigning. As such, derivation of *shiyi*, and hence evaluation of a poem according to the proposed framework, is subject to constraints imposed by the subjectivity of the individual reader. Similarly, since thematisation depends on working on identified themes with individual Micro/micro-contexts of readers, the derived *shiyi* of a poem will also be different from one identified theme to another, and hence the difficulty to fairly evaluate the artistic value of the same poem (not to mention the case of different poems).
5. Some information, as classified as “information outside of MiC [of the general reader]”, is supposed to be unnecessary for inclusion for a poem interpretable by internal contextualisation. However, most of such information (e.g. n.603 (re. M3), n.611, n.614, n.619 and n.621 (re. M4), n.636 and n.640 (re. M5), n.653 (re. M7), n.659 (re. M8), etc.) is readily available to the Micro-context of the author of this thesis at the time of selection of poems and/or conducting their analysis. As such, despite exercise of extreme care, it is possible that this author, having such information in his Micro-context, may not be in the best position to fairly reflect in the analysis what the general reader may actually do in poetry interpretation and appreciation.
6. It is noted that although the hypothesis developed in this thesis is able to differentiate the good poems from the bad ones in terms of *shiyi*, it lacks an inherent objective device to determine the exact difference in *shiyi* between two poems. Hence, the continuum is more a conceptual device than a practical tool

⁶⁹³ It can, for instance, be criticised that M10 and M11 are selected not for their artistic value but for their lack of such value, or that the poems are not representative as only the best are selected.

in poetry analysis/appreciation.

7. Finally, the current research was conducted with a background theory as the underlying assumption,⁶⁹⁴ which is considered exogenous to the (revised) hypothesis. But whether this underlying assumption is legitimate or not cannot be determined within the scope of this thesis.

⁶⁹⁴ The background theory includes upholding the validity of the following: the theoretical virtues (n.24), the holistic approach (Section 1.3.2), Nida and Jin's view on methodology (n.25), the miminalist assumption on truth (n.66), the two revised Principles of Relevance (n.68) and three other attributes (n.133).

Appendix A**Parameters in Perspectives**

A	Key Term	P	Content of P	Remarks
1	macro-context/ micro-context⁶⁹⁵	6	General reader , as suggested by but preferable to Liu Xie's <i>zhiyin</i> , is in a way effectively narrowing or qualifying the openness concept through applying on the reader some conditions (e.g. literary knowledge) which are known to and shared by the author, and can thus be used as the basis of the macro-context posited in this thesis.	P6 closely relates general reader , which can duly encompass Liu Xie's <i>zhiyin</i> , to macro-context .
		9	Zhu Guangqian's world and James Liu's world can be regarded as development in a similar direction, with the former emphasising the <i>buji buli</i> between the poem's world and the real world, seemingly suggesting the function of a poem in extending the knowledge boundary of the existing knowledge base, while the latter stressing the blending of a past experience with the present experience of writing and reading, or the unfamiliar with the familiar. Both of these worlds, however, are not clearly defined, and have to be subsumed under one that is well illuminated by concepts such as Micro/micro-context and Macro/macro-context .	Based on P9, it can reasonably be suggested that, with Macro-context as the major source of available information, and Micro-context as the personal reservoir of readily available information, the poetic world formed in the mind through a reading of a poem <i>lies between the two</i> and can be described as a poetic context , one that will finally be subsumed under the then enlarged Micro-context. The construction of this poetic context concept has thus taken into account the <i>buji buli</i> and the blending of experience of Zhu's world and Liu's world respectively.
		10	[...], Liu's [...] <i>jing</i> , which can include the actual scene as well as the imaginary scene, can readily be replaced by the poetic world/context based on the Micro-context (supposedly a cognitive concept referring to what is in the mind) and the micro-context (an individualised	This <i>special</i> Micro-context, which is a manifestation of the poetic world, should better be referred to as a poetic context . [By contrast, the micro-context is concerned with the individual's context of cultural-literary

⁶⁹⁵ For convenience of deliberation, micro-context and macro-context in this table can also represent their corresponding Micro-context and Macro-context, as the case may be.

		cultural-literary knowledge base).	knowledge.]
	24	The CG as posited in Text World Theory is poised to lend a theoretical basis for conceptualisation and theorisation of the relationship between the Macro/macro-context and the Micro/micro-context as adopted in this thesis, and the description of “text world” may provide a rough definition to a poetic world/context (formed with respect to a particular poem being read) based on the Micro/micro-context.	The CG is a fluid concept in that it keeps on adjusting itself on encountering and taking on new information. This better explains how a Micro-context adjusts itself and gives rise to the poetic context according to new information contained and implicated in a text.
	28	Gadamer’s prejudices can be conceptualised together with the proposed pair of concept of Macro/macro-context and Micro/micro-context , [...]	Prejudices can be regarded as constituting one’s Micro-context , which as his reservoir of information need not be containing information only on truth . Such prejudices are subject to change given new information, which is similar to the case that occurs during interaction between the Micro-context and the Macro-context . This means Gadamer’s prejudices can be subsumed under our Micro-context, which, together with Macro-context, possesses more explanatory power theoretically as different world concepts developed by other theorists can also be handled within this Micro/Macro-context mechanism.
	34	Julia Ching’s essay has a number of implications, including an openness to interpretations of the Chinese classics, and hence its relevance to micro-context and macro-context , [...], and the attentiveness of the Chinese tradition to the spiritual message that transcends the text and is immanent in it, which agrees with the suggestion that language is both	If, as reasonably assumed, what is in the mind is represented in language, then language is limited as in the micro-context , and unlimited as the micro-context can adjust itself over time through its contact /interaction with the macro-context , of which the Chinese tradition, itself a constituent of

			limited and unlimited in its expression. The Chinese tradition, in turn, can be discussed in terms of familiarity , Chineseness and the micro/ macro-context .	Chineseness , can be regarded as an important constituent as far as a Chinese community is concerned.
		37	Gu's essay (on literary openness) suggests that openness was possibly the unexpected outcome of conflicts between canonical critical precepts and critical practice, from which a link can be derived between openness and a canon, and by extension, micro-context and macro-context ; [...]	This openness, which can be understood in terms of the micro-context/macro-context interaction, and by extension, the Micro-context/Macro-context interaction, is unrestrained if a relevance principle is not upheld.
	(internal/external) contextualisation	22	[...Miall and Kuiken's] idea of thematising attempts of the reader to articulate the phenomena within the text sheds light on the contextualisation mechanism [...]	The reader is said to accordingly progressively transform an affective theme across striking or evocative passages, becoming implicated in the existential concerns embodied in those passages. This advises on how contextualisation is thematic-oriented and significance-searching.
2	subtlety	1	With the criterion of <i>shiyi</i> established subsequent to the analysis of the authorship problematic, it is possible to determine whether a poem is unintelligible because it is profoundly difficult or obscure for a reader to derive <i>shiyi</i> from it (Type B unintelligibility : unintelligibility arising from insufficient efforts expended in interpretation of the poem), or simply because it is lacking in meaningfulness, supposedly a necessary condition for <i>shiyi</i> (Type A unintelligibility : unintelligibility arising from unmeaningfulness of the poem)	Type B unintelligibility, which is posited as lying at the other end of the subtlety-unintelligibility continuum as opposed to subtlety , is characterised in terms of <i>shiyi</i> and, indirectly, meaningfulness, which is directly related to Type A unintelligibility.
	familiarity	8	Wang Li's versification study may lend a vague support to its underlying concept of familiarity to that of form and prosodic devices .	Specifically, form and prosodic devices can change a lot over time, so familiarity to them may not be

			rewarding in all cases. Generally speaking, however, familiarity is still the golden rule to follow.
9	Zhu Guangqian's world and James Liu's world can be regarded as development in a similar direction, with the former emphasising the <i>buji buli</i> between the poem's world and the real world, seemingly suggesting the function of a poem in extending the knowledge boundary of the existing knowledge base, while the latter stressing the blending of a past experience with the present experience of writing and reading, or the unfamiliar with the familiar. [...]		The two worlds can be understood in terms of familiarity : <i>buji buli</i> is allowing oneself to be neither too familiar, thus without losing impact from the new, nor too unfamiliar, thus without losing a solid ground for interpretation; the blending of a past experience with the present experience is the same as the blending of the old or the familiar with the new or the unfamiliar.
10	Insofar as the blending of the familiar with the unfamiliar is concerned, Liu's world also supports the notion of familiarity , [...]		Familiarity can be understood in terms of degree of knowledge, which is a measure of information available to the person concerned.
12	The implication of Yip's model is the resulting reinforcement of a literary tradition or canon by both authors and readers, whose reading experience is integrated and regurgitated into the writing process through reader expectations, and hence its relevance to familiarity , which as a quality/an attribute can contribute to reduced unmeaningfulness (Type A unintelligibility).		This establishes a relationship between familiarity and Type A unintelligibility.
19	Shklovsky's "defamiliarisation" is in particular relevant to the working of the concept of familiarity in poetry.		Defamiliarisation , however, can only be one of the techniques for achieving <i>shiyi</i> .
22	[...Miall and Kuiken's] identification of the reinterpetive effort that follows defamiliarisation as the source of individual differences in response to literary texts also calls for reworking or even replacement of defamiliarisation by or through our familiarity (as well as its accompanying concept (un)familiarisation). [...]		Usually associated with literariness, defamiliarisation is overestimated as far as its significance to <i>shiyi</i> is concerned. Familiarity , as well as (un)familiarisation, is a better alternative in this regard.
28	Gadamer's [...] fusion of horizons is relevant to		It is the fusion of the familiar and the

		James Liu's world , as well as the understanding process characterised by the concept of (un)familiarity .	unfamiliar that underlies both Gadamer's and Liu's models.
	30	Ricoeur's deliberations on achieving self-understanding by means of understanding others through hermeneutics is of particular relevance to this thesis regarding the concept of (un)familiarity , as well as the aim/value of reading literature/poetry, and his " world of the text " may be adapted to support Liu's world with a hermeneutic basis, so as to form a poetic world/context based on the Micro/micro-context.	Ricoeur's model can be used to spell out the function of literature as truthfulness enhancement, with the constructed world being a tool/mechanism for delivering this function.
	34	Julia Ching's essay has a number of implications, including [...] the attentiveness of the Chinese tradition to the spiritual message that transcends the text and is immanent in it, which agrees with the suggestion that language is both limited and unlimited in its expression. The Chinese tradition, in turn, can be discussed in terms of familiarity , Chineseness and micro/ macro-context .	The Chinese tradition is considered an important source of Chineseness and micro/macro-context, familiarity to which is closely related to unmeaningfulness (Type A unintelligibility) reduction.
<i>shiyi</i>	1	With the criterion of <i>shiyi</i> established subsequent to the analysis of the authorship problematic, it is possible to determine whether a poem is unintelligible because it is profoundly difficult or obscure for a reader to derive <i>shiyi</i> from it (Type B unintelligibility : unintelligibility arising from insufficient efforts expended in interpretation of the poem), or simply because it is lacking in meaningfulness, supposedly a necessary condition for <i>shiyi</i> (Type A unintelligibility : unintelligibility arising from unmeaningfulness of the poem).	<i>Shiyi</i> is key to sorting out the unintelligibility problem.
	3	Openness, or its related and similar concepts such as Dong Zhongshu's <i>shi wu da gu</i> as construed with a reader-centred orientation, can be dealt with by a reader-centred approach,	Openness, or its related and similar concepts such as Dong Zhongshu's <i>shi wu da gu</i> as construed with a reader-centred orientation, can be dealt

		which is already tackled by <i>shiyi</i> if a valuation approach based on intentionalism (re. Davies) is adopted.	with by <i>shiyi</i> .
	4	Suggestiveness, which can subsume under it concepts such as Liu Xie's <i>yin</i> , Sikong Tu's <i>hanxu</i> , Yan Yu's <i>yan you jin er yi wu qiong</i> and Ye Xie's <i>yan zai ci er yi zai bi</i> , is more relevant to the creation of <i>shiyi</i> , and is also related to Chow Tse-Tsung's <i>wen yi zai dao</i> in terms of exposition of truth , which is considered the focus of Sikong Tu's "poetics of transcendence" and Ye Xie's sayable/unsayable and explicable/inexplicable interplay.	Suggestiveness, which is relevant to creation of <i>shiyi</i> , is considered related to exposition of truth. As such, <i>shiyi</i> is also related to truth exposition.
	5	Echoing conciseness and preciseness arrived at in the language studies surveyed earlier, economy , as promoted by Yan Yu's <i>yan you jin er yi wu qiong</i> and supported by Chow Tse-Tsung's <i>wen yi zai dao</i> , is generally considered a guiding principle for differentiating the good poetry from the bad, which can be included in our conceptualisation of <i>shiyi</i> .	Conceptualisation of <i>shiyi</i> should incorporate the idea of economy.
	7	World , as expounded by Wang Fuzhi's <i>qingjing jiaorong</i> , is also related to <i>shiyi</i> in terms of how it can be created.	Creation of <i>shiyi</i> can be explicated in terms of <i>qingjing jiaorong</i> , a poetic world constructing technique, which in turn can be understood in terms of the merging of the familiar (<i>qing</i> or <i>jing</i>) and the unfamiliar (<i>jing</i> or <i>qing</i>).
	11	Wai-lim Yip's "Chinese Theory of Reading" provides a more balanced approach to the interpretation problem through integrating the reading experience of a reader and an author, as well as pinpointing a poem's openness to various different voices, and can thus be dealt with by <i>shiyi</i> .	Wai-lim Yip's more balanced approach to the interpretation problem can be subsumed under the proposed theory of <i>shiyi</i> .
	15	Yu's imagery model is commensurate with, and may as well support, Chow Tse-Tsung's so-called Confucianist approach of viewing	<i>Shiyi</i> is linked to exposition of truth.

		literature as having the potential for effective exposition of the <i>Dao</i> , thus also effectively relating <i>Dao</i> , or truth , to <i>shiyi</i> .	
	16	Gu's suggestiveness, which also captures the concept of openness, represents modern efforts to recover the obscure link between Dong Zhongshu's <i>shi wu da gu</i> , Sikong Tu's <i>hanxu</i> (and by extension, Liu Xie's <i>yin</i> , Yan Yu's <i>yan you jin er yi wu qiong</i> and Ye Xie's <i>yan zai ci er yi zai bi</i>) and exposition of the <i>Dao</i> (and thus truth , and <i>shiyi</i>) as expounded by Chow Tse-Tsung in his examination of the so-called Confucianist approach of viewing literature (which in turn is related to Sikong Tu's "poetics of transcendence" and Ye Xie's sayable/unsayable and explicable/inexplicable interplay).	There is a close link between suggestiveness and truth, and hence <i>shiyi</i> .
	17	In terms of James Liu's double exploration of worlds and languages, the exploration of worlds can be compared to extension of the knowledge boundary for truth -seeking, and the exploration of language can be compared to creation of <i>shiyi</i> . This double exploration, of course, dictates the inseparability of truth and <i>shiyi</i> .	Truth and <i>shiyi</i> are inseparable according to James Liu's model.
	18	Poe's "The Poetic Principle" is another way of suggesting the economy concept in Chinese poetics.	Conceptualisation of <i>shiyi</i> should incorporate the idea of economy.
	20	Riffaterre's two-level system provides some insights as to how technically the underlying meaning in a text can be recovered in a two-level system, and hopefully by extension, a two- world model, and his "saying one thing and meaning another" also reminds one of its similarity to Ye Xie's <i>yan zai ci er yi zai bi</i> , and hence its relevance to the creation of <i>shiyi</i> and Chow Tse-Tsung's elaborated <i>wen yi zai dao</i> as far as exposition of truth is concerned.	Riffaterre's two-level system reinforces the link between <i>shiyi</i> and exposition of truth.
	21	Hyland's Plato lends support to the difficulty in	This relates to how language is

		defining an abstract concept, such as <i>shiyi</i> , and provides an entry point to recognising the opposition between the adequacy of words in expressing the real truths and the simplicity of expression if such truths are indeed expressed in words, which is relevant to the subtlety-unintelligibility continuum posited in this thesis.	(un)limited in expression of truth.
	22	Miall and Kuiken's model on literariness has provided a most insightful reference model as to how <i>shiyi</i> can be conceptualised. Their focus on the reading experience of the reader in terms of transformation of feelings/concepts is highly relevant to theorisation of the concept of <i>shiyi</i> . [...] their identification of the reinterpetive effort that follows defamiliarisation as the source of individual differences in response to literary texts also calls for reworking or even replacement of defamiliarisation by or through our familiarity (as well as its accompanying concept (un)familiarisation). [...] the transformation on the reader they describe as the result of such [thematizing] attempts also advises on the working of <i>shiyi</i> as outcome of poetry reading.	Miall and Kuiken's elaboration on the transformation of feelings/concepts by means of thematising attempts is highly relevant to theorisation of the concept of <i>shiyi</i> , which is also integrated with familiarity (as well as (un)familiarisation).
	23	Relevance theory is found relevant to the pursuit of this thesis considering that valuation by means of <i>shiyi</i> is about selecting the relevant elements from the context that can contribute to maximisation of <i>shiyi</i> . Besides, themes are found to be necessary for supporting this maximisation of <i>shiyi</i> .	Relevance can thus be referred to as relevance of the meaningful units in a poem to maximisation of <i>shiyi</i> facilitated by themes.
	25	The implications of the problem of vagueness can be analysed under consideration of the distinction between ordinary language and poetic language and of the practical difficulties of formulating a proposed theory of <i>shiyi</i> .	This is related to the nature of poetic language as well as its implication on how to formulate a theory of <i>shiyi</i> .
	26	Intentionalism, an approach focusing on	Intentionalism can be absorbed and

		recovering the author's intention with a view to locating the correct meaning, is practised in the Chinese literary hermeneutic tradition. Such an approach, however, can be absorbed and dealt with satisfactorily by <i>shiyi</i> .	dealt with satisfactorily by the proposed criterion of <i>shiyi</i> .
	27	It is possible to take Zhu Xi's tension between his will to know and uncertainty to answer into consideration, so as to posit the truth vs. truthfulness relationship that can be used to highlight the uniqueness of human sciences.	The truth vs. truthfulness relationship can be used to highlight the uniqueness of human sciences.
	29	Though overstated, Gadamer's assertion that hermeneutic understanding can reveal and guarantee truths that the scientific method cannot rightly suggests the likelihood of continuous improvement on truthfulness through the never-ending negotiations of hermeneutics.	Hermeneutics can be characterised by continuous improvement on truthfulness achieved through its never-ending negotiations.
	30	Ricoeur's deliberations on achieving self-understanding by means of understanding others through hermeneutics is of particular relevance to this thesis regarding the concept of (un)familiarity , as well as the aim/value of reading literature/poetry, and his " world of the text " may be adapted to support Liu's world with a hermeneutic basis, so as to form a poetic world/context based on the Micro/micro-context.	Ricoeur's deliberations on achieving self-understanding by means of understanding others provide a solid foundation for Liu's world.
	31	Through his study of metaphor, Ricoeur suggests how a poetic discourse can supplement descriptive language, and this is related to how <i>shiyi</i> can be derived through poetic language.	This points to the distinctiveness of poetic language from descriptive language, and such distinctiveness can be considered the basis of achieving <i>shiyi</i> .
	35	Kuang Yu Chen's essay has pointed out a possible trade-off between freedom of interpretation and attention given to the authorship problem of a classical text, the relationship between the practical use that <i>Shijing</i> has been put to and the value attached	This projects a practical orientation in the Chinese hermeneutic tradition.

			to, and hence the truth conveyed in, literature by the tradition, and the practical nature of hermeneutics in the Chinese tradition.	
		36	Jianhua Chen's essay has shed light on the aim of hermeneutics as getting closer to the ultimate truth , which necessitates a proposed replacement in the human sciences of the notion of (absolute) truth by that of (a sense of) truthfulness as the outcome of pursuit.	Truthfulness is a better and more realistic outcome of pursuit in interpretation of poetry.
		37	Gu's essay (on literary openness) suggests that [...] intentionalism had long been prevalent in the Chinese hermeneutic tradition to suggest the possibility of obtaining the truth of meaning through identification of authorial intention, which has implications on <i>shiyi</i> .	The problem of authorial intention can be dealt with by <i>shiyi</i> .
		38	Pilkington's account on poetic effect, which focuses attention on "small-scale poetic effects", is unsatisfactory for this thesis, and his separation of literariness from literature fails to incorporate the tradition into a literary study. Hence, a "large-scale" approach to <i>shiyi</i> is required.	Pilkington's account on poetic effect is far from a satisfactory literary model for poetry analysis, such as one based on our <i>shiyi</i> .
		39	Tendahl's hybrid theory of metaphor is more concerned with the innermost cognitive mechanism through which the processing of metaphor is conducted rather than providing a proportionally informative account of the literary effect actually perceived on the part of the hearer. Hence, an approach focusing on <i>shiyi</i> is required.	Tendahl's hybrid theory of metaphor is far from a satisfactory literary model for poetry analysis, such as one based on <i>shiyi</i> .
3	prosodic devices	8	Wang Li's versification study may lend a vague support to its underlying concept of familiarity to that of form and prosodic devices .	Specifically, form and prosodic devices can change a lot over time, so familiarity to them may not be rewarding in all cases. Generally speaking, however, familiarity is still the golden rule to follow.
4	general reader	6	General reader , as suggested by but preferable to Liu Xie's <i>zhiyin</i> , is in a way effectively	General reader is considered to be the theoretical basis of macro-context .

		narrowing or qualifying the openness concept through applying on the reader some conditions (e.g. literary knowledge) which are known to and shared by the author, and can thus be used as the basis of the macro-context posited in this thesis.	
	13	Owen's lore and <i>zhiyin</i> (a variety or development of Liu Xie's <i>zhiyin</i>) can be compared to Chineseness and subsumable under the general reader , just that our new concepts are more encompassing as they include the culture factor in addition to that of the literary tradition.	Owen's <i>zhiyin</i> (a variety or development of Liu Xie's <i>zhiyin</i>) can be subsumed under general reader .
	14	Pauline Yu establishes an assumed association by the Chinese reader between the imagery in a poem (and what a reader may draw from it) and the original message entrusted by the poet to the words therein, which lends support to the tradition of <i>wen yi zai dao</i> as elaborated by Chow Tse-Tsung, which in turn entails reinforcement of the author-reader interaction and relationship as built up in Wai-lim Yip's model, as well as in Owen's concept of <i>zhiyin</i> , and by extension our general reader .	Pauline Yu's model indirectly reinforces general reader .
	22	[...] Besides offering insights as regards conceptualisation of the general reader , their identification of the reinterpreted effort that follows defamiliarisation as the source of individual differences in response to literary texts also calls for reworking or even replacement of defamiliarisation by or through our familiarity (as well as its accompanying concept (un)familiarisation). [...]	According to this view, defamiliarisation is among the devices to trigger reader response, which may be different according to individual differences, and understanding of such differences, esp. in terms of familiarity (and (un)familiarisation), may be beneficial to conceptualisation of the general reader .
	40	Hockx's study offers a good example of literary study that could have been more useful reference, but it is based only on a limited and restricted readership as the focus of his model of "reader's response". Hence, a new concept of	General reader should be defined according to clearly stated and reasonably specified criteria.

			general reader is required.	
5	Chinese-ness	2	A poetic language should take precedence over the <i>baihua</i> in our analysis of poetry. Besides, attention should be drawn to the culture/literary tradition factor (re. Chaofen Sun), or our Chineseness , in this poetic language, which should also benefit from conciseness and preciseness. This effectively relates <i>shiyi</i> to Chineseness, as well as conciseness and preciseness, if the poetic language is to capture all the essences as mentioned.	Conciseness and preciseness can be subsumed under Chineseness which is characteristic of the poetic language.
		13	Owen's lore and <i>zhiyin</i> (a variety or development of Liu Xie's <i>zhiyin</i>) can be compared to Chineseness and subsumable under the general reader , just that our new concepts are more encompassing as they include the culture factor in addition to that of the literary tradition.	Owen's lore can be subsumed under Chineseness .
		34	Julia Ching's essay has a number of implications, including [...] the attentiveness of the Chinese tradition to the spiritual message that transcends the text and is immanent in it, which agrees with the suggestion that language is both limited and unlimited in its expression. The Chinese tradition, in turn, can be discussed in terms of familiarity , Chineseness and micro/macro-context .	The Chinese tradition is considered to be a major source of Chineseness .
		41	Treatments of Chineseness by the scholars introduced thus far, including a culture concept (Tu Wei-ming), an ethnicity concept (Rey Chow), <i>the</i> source of literariness (Michelle Yeh), a more geographically-centred notion (Gregory B. Lee) and a civilisation concept (Wang Gungwu), are not considered appropriate for the pursuit of this thesis, which instead places Chineseness as a cultural-literary concept.	As far as literature is concerned, Chineseness as a cultural-literary concept is appropriately encompassing and rightly specific.
6	(paradox)	2	A poetic language should take precedence over	The significance of culture/literary

	of) vernacular benefit		the <i>baihua</i> in our analysis of poetry. Besides, attention should be drawn to the culture/literary tradition factor (re. Chaofen Sun), or our Chineseness , in this poetic language, which should also benefit from conciseness and preciseness. This effectively relates <i>shiyi</i> to Chineseness, as well as conciseness and preciseness, if the poetic language is to capture all the essences as mentioned.	tradition, or Chineseness, in the poetic language in a way defies the so-called vernacular benefit .
N A	NA	32	The three stages of Ricoeur's "hermeneutical circle" may well be considered/adapted for operational procedures for poetry analysis.	Related to poetry analysis.
N A	NA	33	Jauss's reception theory is methodologically relevant to this thesis as it effectively links hermeneutics to literary study through incorporating a historical dimension into interpretation.	Related to foundation of the proposed theory.
N A	NA	34	Julia Ching's essay has a number of implications, including [...] the established value of classical texts (as compared to yet-to-establish value of modern poems) as reflecting on how a hermeneutic study is conducted, [...]	Related to poetry analysis.

Appendix B**Definitions of Key Terms**

A	Key Term	Insights from Parameters	Definition/Remarks
1	macro-context/	P6: P6 closely relates general reader , which can duly encompass Liu Xie's <i>zhiyin</i> , to macro-context .	Closely related to general reader, Macro-context is
	micro-context	P9: Based on P9, it can reasonably be suggested that, with Macro-context as the major source of available information, and Micro-context as the personal reservoir of readily available information, the poetic world formed in the mind through a reading of a poem <i>lies between the two</i> and can be described as a poetic context , one that will finally be subsumed under the then enlarged Micro-context. The construction of this poetic context concept has thus taken into account the <i>buji buli</i> and the blending of experience of Zhu's world and Liu's world respectively.	defined as "what is outside of a reader's mind that is accessible through extra/further efforts of assimilation", which are made in addition to processing efforts expended in comprehension of a text.
		P10: This <i>special</i> Micro-context, which is a manifestation of the poetic world, should better be referred to as a poetic context .	And Micro-context is defined as "what is in one's mind". Besides, it is necessary to add the
		P24: The CG is a fluid concept in that it keeps on adjusting itself on encountering and taking on new information. This better explains how a Micro-context adjusts itself and gives rise to the poetic context according to new information contained and implicated in a text.	poetic context , which is defined as "the special, imaginary sub-Micro-context that is developed on/after reading a poem".
		P28: Prejudices can be regarded as constituting one's Micro-context , which as his reservoir of information need not be containing information only on truth . Such prejudices are subject to change given new information, which is similar to the case that occurs during interaction between the Micro-context and the Macro-context . This means Gadamer's prejudices can be subsumed under our Micro-context, which, together with Macro-context, possesses more explanatory power theoretically as different world concepts developed by other theorists can also be handled within this	

		Micro/Macro-context mechanism.	
		P34: If, as reasonably assumed, what is in the mind is represented in language, then language is limited as in the micro-context , and unlimited as the micro-context can adjust itself over time through its contact / interaction with the macro-context , of which the Chinese tradition, itself a constituent of Chineseness , can be regarded as an important constituent.	
		P37: This openness, which can be understood in terms of the micro-context/macro-context interaction, and by extension, the Micro-context/Macro-context interaction, is unrestrained if a relevance principle is not upheld.	
	(internal/external) contextualisation	P22: The reader is said to accordingly progressively transform an affective theme across striking or evocative passages, becoming implicated in the existential concerns embodied in those passages. This advises on how contextualisation is thematic-oriented and significance-searching.	This suggests how thematisation, a higher-level contextualisation , can be carried out.
2	subtlety	P1: Type B unintelligibility, which is posited as lying at the other end of the subtlety-unintelligibility continuum as opposed to subtlety , is characterised in terms of <i>shiyi</i> and, indirectly, meaningfulness, which is directly related to Type A unintelligibility.	Subtlety is defined as “the measure of likeliness of deriving <i>shiyi</i> from meaningfulness”.
	familiarity	P8: Specifically, form and prosodic devices can change a lot over time, so familiarity to them may not be rewarding in all cases. Generally speaking, however, familiarity is still the golden rule to follow.	Familiarity is defined as “the mental state of feeling familiar to what is in the common overlapping area between the Micro-context (which includes the micro-context) of a general reader and the Macro-context (which includes the macro-context)”. (N.B.: A reader can be
		P9: The two worlds can be understood in terms of familiarity : <i>buji buli</i> is allowing oneself to be neither too familiar, thus without losing impact from the new, nor too unfamiliar, thus without losing a solid ground for interpretation; the blending of a past experience with the present experience is the same as the blending of the old or the familiar with the new or the unfamiliar.	
		P10: Familiarity can be understood in terms of degree of knowledge, which is a measure of information available to the person concerned.	

		P12: This establishes a relationship between familiarity and Type A unintelligibility.	familiar to anything in his mind, or
		P19: Defamiliarisation , however, can only be one of the techniques for achieving <i>shiyi</i> .	Micro-context, but we are more interested in the
		P22: Usually associated with literariness, defamiliarisation is overestimated as far as its significance to <i>shiyi</i> is concerned. Familiarity , as well as (un)familiarisation, is a better alternative in this regard.	overlapping area, which is key to the
		P28: It is the fusion of the familiar and the unfamiliar that underlies both Gadamer's and Liu's models.	unintelligibility problem attributed to a work supposed to be read by the public.)
		P30: Ricoeur's model can be used to spell out the function of literature as truthfulness enhancement, with the constructed world being a tool/mechanism for delivering this function.	Accordingly,
		P34: The Chinese tradition is considered an important source of Chineseness and micro/macro-context, familiarity to which is closely related to unmeaningfulness (Type A unintelligibility) reduction.	(un)familiarisation can be coined to include
	<i>shiyi</i>		familiarisation (the act of familiarising unfamiliar ideas with a view to achieving positive cognitive effect) and
		P1: <i>Shiyi</i> is key to sorting out the unintelligibility problem.	unfamiliarisation (the act of unfamiliarising familiar ideas with a view to achieving positive cognitive effect).
		P3: Openness, or its related and similar concepts such as Dong Zhongshu's <i>shi wu da gu</i> as construed with a reader-centred orientation, can be dealt with by <i>shiyi</i> .	
		P4: Suggestiveness, which is relevant to creation of <i>shiyi</i> , is considered related to exposition of truth. As such, <i>shiyi</i> is also related to truth exposition.	
		P5: Conceptualisation of <i>shiyi</i> should incorporate the idea of economy.	
		P7: Creation of <i>shiyi</i> can be explicated in terms of <i>qingjing jiaorong</i> , a poetic world constructing technique,	
			<i>Shiyi</i> is defined as "a sense of immediate [here incorporating the concept of economy] embrace of enhanced truthfulness that is resulted from reading of a poem through thematising attempts by a reader made against (un)familiarising meaningful units ⁶⁹⁶ in

⁶⁹⁶ These units are used for (un)familiarisation purposes (re. definition of familiarity above), which will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

	<p>which in turn can be understood in terms of the merging of the familiar (<i>qing</i> or <i>jing</i>) and the unfamiliar (<i>jing</i> or <i>qing</i>).</p> <p>P11: Wai-lim Yip's more balanced approach to the interpretation problem can be subsumed under the proposed theory of <i>shiyi</i>.</p> <p>P15: <i>Shiyi</i> is linked to exposition of truth.</p> <p>P16: There is a close link between suggestiveness and truth, and hence <i>shiyi</i>.</p> <p>P17: Truth and <i>shiyi</i> are inseparable according to James Liu's model.</p> <p>P18: Conceptualisation of <i>shiyi</i> should incorporate the idea of economy.</p> <p>P20: Michael Riffaterre's two-level system reinforces the link between <i>shiyi</i> and exposition of truth.</p> <p>P21: This relates to how language is (un)limited in expression of truth.</p> <p>P22: Miall and Kuiken's elaboration on the transformation of feelings/concepts by means of thematising attempts is highly relevant to theorisation of the concept of <i>shiyi</i>, which is also integrated with familiarity (as well as (un)familiarisation).</p> <p>P23: Relevance can thus be referred to as relevance of the meaningful units in a poem to maximisation of <i>shiyi</i> facilitated by themes.</p> <p>P25: This is related to the nature of poetic language as well as its implication on how to formulate a theory of <i>shiyi</i>.</p> <p>P26: Intentionalism can be absorbed and dealt with satisfactorily by the proposed criterion of <i>shiyi</i>.</p> <p>P27: The truth vs. truthfulness relationship can be used to highlight the uniqueness of human sciences.</p> <p>P29: Hermeneutics can be characterised by continuous improvement on truthfulness achieved through its never-ending negotiations.</p> <p>P30: Ricoeur's deliberations on achieving self-understanding by means of understanding others provide a solid foundation for Liu's world.</p>	the poem".
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		<p>P31: This points to the distinctiveness of poetic language from descriptive language, and such distinctiveness can be considered the basis of achieving <i>shiyi</i>.</p> <p>P35: This projects a practical orientation in the Chinese hermeneutic tradition.</p> <p>P36: Truthfulness is a better and more realistic outcome of pursuit in interpretation of poetry.</p> <p>P37: The problem of authorial intention can be dealt with by <i>shiyi</i>.</p> <p>P38: Pilkington's account on poetic effect is far from a satisfactory literary model for poetry analysis, such as one based on our <i>shiyi</i>.</p> <p>P39: Tendahl's hybrid theory of metaphor is far from a satisfactory literary model for poetry analysis, such as one based on <i>shiyi</i>.</p>	
3	prosodic devices	<p>P8: Specifically, form and prosodic devices can change a lot over time, so familiarity to them may not be rewarding in all cases. Generally speaking, however, familiarity is still the golden rule to follow.</p>	<p>This suggests that instead of prosodic devices, attention should be focused on the mechanism of the use of familiarity. A3 can thus be subsumed under A2.</p>
4	general reader	<p>P6: General reader is considered to be the theoretical basis of macro-context.</p> <p>P13: Owen's <i>zhiyin</i> (a variety or development of Liu Xie's <i>zhiyin</i>) can be subsumed under general reader.</p> <p>P14: Pauline Yu's model indirectly reinforces general reader.</p> <p>P22: According to this view, defamiliarisation is among the devices to trigger reader response, which may be different according to individual differences, and understanding of such differences, esp. in terms of familiarity (and (un)familiarisation), may be beneficial to conceptualisation of the general reader.</p> <p>P40: General reader should be defined according to clearly stated and reasonably specified criteria.</p>	<p>As a generic concept, general reader is defined as "a sufficiently learned reader whose (literary-cultural) micro-context shares significantly with the (literary-cultural) macro-context in the Chinese community to which he belongs".</p>

5	Chinese-ness	P2: Conciseness and preciseness can be subsumed under Chineseness which is characteristic of the poetic language.	As far as literature is concerned, Chineseness , which is characteristic of the poetic language, is defined as “a knowledge base that incorporates knowledge of the Chinese literary and cultural tradition in a concise and precise manner”.
		P13: Owen’s lore can be subsumed under Chineseness .	
		P34: The Chinese tradition is considered to be a major source of Chineseness .	
		P41: As far as literature is concerned, Chineseness as a cultural-literary concept is appropriately encompassing and rightly specific.	
6	(paradox of) vernacular benefit	P2: The significance of culture/literary tradition, or Chineseness, in the poetic language in a way nullifies the so-called vernacular benefit .	This supports and should be incorporated into A5 .

Appendix C**Original Poems and Their Translations****Modern Poems**

(M1) Zhu Xiang's 朱湘 "Dang pu" 當舖 (A Pawnshop, 1925):

T	當舖	A Pawnshop
1	美/開了/一家當舖，	"Beauty" has opened a pawnshop,
2	專/收/人的心；	Specialising in holding men's hearts.
3	到期/人/拿/票/去贖，	[But] when it is time for hearts to be redeemed,
4	它/已經/關門！	The shop is shut!

(M2) Bian Zhilin's 卞之琳 "Duan zhang" 斷章 (Fragments, 1935):

T	斷章	Fragments
1	你/站在/橋上/看/風景，	You stand on the bridge looking at the view--
2	看風景的人/在樓上/看/你。	The viewer on the balcony is viewing you.
3	明月/裝飾了/你的/窗子，	The moon adorns your window--
4	你/裝飾了/別人的/夢。	You adorn someone else's dream.

(M3) Wen Yiduo's 聞一多 "Xintiao" 心跳 (Throbbing of Heart, 1927):

T	心跳	Throbbing of Heart
1	這燈光，/這燈光/漂白了的/四壁；	This light, and four light-bleached walls;
2	這賢良的/桌椅，/朋友/似的/親密；	These virtuous desk and chairs, as intimate as friends;
3	這古書的/紙/香/一陣陣的/襲/來；	This ancient book, the fragrance of its pages sweeping near;
4	要好的/茶杯/貞女/一般的/潔白；	My dear teacup as white and clean as a virgin;
5	受哺的/小兒/喂/哺/在/母親/懷裡，	My younger boy breastfed in his mum's bosom,
6	鼾聲/報導/我/大兒/康健的/消息.....	Snoring attests my elder son's good health...
7	這/神秘的/靜夜，/這/渾圓的/和平，	This mysterious silent night, this perfect peace in its entirety,

- 8 我喉嚨裡顫動着/感謝的/歌聲。 In my throat vibrates a hymn of thankfulness.
 9 但是/歌聲/馬上/又/變成了/咒詛， Yet the hymn soon turns into a curse,
 10 靜夜！/我/不能/不能/受/你的/賄賂。 Silent night! I cannot, cannot accept your bribe.
 11 誰/希罕/你/這牆內/尺⁶⁹⁷方的/和平！ Who would cherish this peace of a few metres enclosed by walls!
- 12 我的/世界/還有/更遼闊的/邊境。 My world has much wider boundaries.
 13 這四牆/既/隔不斷/戰爭的/喧囂， These four walls cannot cut off the uproar of war,
 14 你/有/什麼/方法/禁止/我的/心跳？ In what way can you stop the throbbing of my heart?
 15 最好是/讓/這口裡/塞滿了/沙泥， Best to fill this mouth with sand and mud,
 16 如/其它/只/會/唱着/個人的/休戚！ Or else it will sing a song only of personal weal and woe!
- 17 最好是/讓/這頭顱/給/田鼠/掘洞， Best to leave this head for a vole to dig a hole,
 18 讓/這一團/血肉/也/去/喂着/屍蟲， To leave this lump of flesh and blood as maggots' feed;
- 19 如果/只是/為了/一杯酒，/一本詩， If only for the sake of a glass of wine, an anthology of poetry,
 20 靜夜裡/鐘擺/搖/來的/一片/閒適， In a silent night the swaying of the pendulum brings repose,
 21 就/聽不見了/你們/四鄰的/呻吟， Unheard will be the moans and groans from your neighbourhood,
 22 看不見/寡婦/孤兒/抖顫的/身影， Unseen will be the quivering shadows of widows and orphans,
- 23 戰壕裡的/痙攣，/瘋人/咬着/病榻， Spasms in trenches, madmen gripping their sickbeds,
 24 和/各種/慘劇/在生活的/磨子下。 And tragedies of all sorts under the mill of life.
 25 幸福！/我/如今/不能/受/你的/私/賄， Bliss! Now I can't accept your private bribe,
 26 我的/世界/不在/這尺方的/牆內。 Because my world is not confined by this walled space of a few metres' size.
- 27 聽！/又是/一陣/炮聲，/死神/在咆哮。 Listen! Again comes the firing of cannons, the roaring of Death.
 28 靜夜！/你/如何/能/禁止/我的/心跳？ Silent night! How can you stop the throbbing of my heart?

⁶⁹⁷ "Chi" is a unit of length equal to one-third of a metre, and is rendered as metre in the translation.

(M4) Xu Zhimo's 徐志摩 "Liangge yueliang" 兩個月亮 (Two Moons, 1931):

T	兩個月亮	Two Moons
S1		
1	我/望見/有/兩個月亮：	I saw two moons:
2	一般的/樣，不同的/相。	With the same face yet different looks.
3	一個/這時/正在天上，	One of them is now in the sky,
4	披敞著/雀毛的/衣裳；	A cloak of feathers hanging from her shoulders;
5	她/不吝惜/她的/恩情，	Not grudgingly are her favours given:
6	滿地/全是/她的/金銀。	Her gold and silver spread all over the earth.
7	她/不忘/故宮的/琉璃，	She doesn't forget the glass-tiles of the empty palace,
8	三海/間/有/她的/清麗。	The Three Lakes share her limpid light.
9	她/跳出/雲頭，/跳上/樹，	She jumps out of the clouds and leaps to the tree-top,
10	又/躲進/新綠的/藤蘿。	And hides in the fresh green wisteria.
11	她/那樣/玲瓏，/那樣/美，	She is so delicate, so beautiful,
12	水底的/魚兒/也得/醉！	The depths must be filled with tipsy fish!
13	但/她/有/一點子/不好，	And yet she has a flaw:
14	她/老/愛/向/瘦小/裏/耗；	She just loves to retreat into herself;
15	有時/滿天/祇/見/星/點，	Sometimes the sky is left to the stars,
16	沒了/那/迷人的/圓臉，	And unseen is the bewitching round face.
17	雖則/到時候/照樣/回來，	Though in time she will return as usual,
18	但/這份/相思/有些/難挨！	Longing to see her can be hard to bear!
S2		
19	還有/那個/你/看不見，	There is another moon you do not see,
20	雖則/不提/有/多麼/艷！	Though her splendour is beyond praise!
21	她/也有/她/醉渦的/笑，	She also has her dimpled smile,
22	還有/轉動時的/靈妙；	And grace with which she turns around;
23	說/慷慨/她/也/從不/讓人，	She is no less generous than the other moon,
24	可惜/你/望不到/我的/園林！	What a pity that you cannot see my garden!
25	可貴/是/她/無邊的/法力，	How precious is her boundless magic power,
26	常/把/我/靈波/向/高/裏/提：	The waves of my spirit often drawn by its pull:
27	我/最愛/那/銀濤的/洶湧，	I love her sudden swell of silver waves the most,
28	浪花裏/有/音樂的/銀鐘；	In the spray are the melodies of silver bells;
29	就/那些/馬尾似的/白沫，	Even the horsetail-like white foam,
30	也/比得/珠寶/經過/雕琢。	Is comparable to well polished jewels.
31	一輪/完美的/明月，	A full moon of perfect beauty,
32	又況/是/永不/殘缺！	Whose fullness never wanes!
33	祇要/我/閉上/這/一雙/眼，	Whenever I close my eyes,

34	她/就/婷婷的/升上了/天！	She will gracefully climb up the sky!
Date	四月二日圓月深夜	April 2, late at night with a full moon.

(M5) Dai Wangshu's 戴望舒 "Woyong cansun de shouzhang" 我用殘損的手掌
(With My Injured Hand, 1942):

T	我/用/殘損的/手掌	With My Injured Hand
1	我/用/殘損的/手掌	With my injured hand
2	摸索/這/廣大的/土地:	I grope around on this expansive earth:
3	這/一角/已變成/灰燼，	This corner has already turned to ashes,
4	那/一角/只是/血和泥；	That corner is only blood and mud;
5	這/一片/湖/該是/我的/家鄉，	This stretch of water must be my old home,
6	(春天，/堤/上/繁/花/如/錦障，	(Where spring brings a brocade of flowers to the dike,
7	嫩/柳/枝/折斷/有/奇異的/芬芳)	And that rare scent, from a broken young willow twig.) ⁶⁹⁸
8	我/觸到/荇藻/和/水的/微涼；	I touch the coolness of the reeds and water;
9	這/長白山的/雪峰/冷/到/徹骨，	The snowy peaks of Long White Mountain chill the bones,
10	這/黃河的/水/夾/泥沙/在指間/滑 出；	The water in the Yellow River carries the sand and mud which slip through the fingers;
11	江南的/水田，/你/當年/新生的/禾草	Paddy fields south of the Yangtze, in those days your new shoots
12	是/那麼/細，/那麼/軟...../現在/只有 /蓬蒿；	Were so fine, so tender...now there are only reeds,
13	嶺南的/荔枝/花/寂寞地/憔悴，	The <i>lizhi</i> blossoms of Lingnan look lonely and weary,
14	盡/那邊，/我/蘸著/南海/沒有/漁船 的/苦/水.....	And right over there, I dip my hand into the bitter water of a South China Sea without fishing boats...
15	無形的/手掌/掠過/無限的/江山，	My formless hand flits over limitless rivers and mountains,
16	手指/沾了/血和灰，/手掌/粘了/陰 暗，	My fingers are stained with blood and ashes, my palm with gloom,
17	只/有/那/遼遠的/一角/依然/完整，	There is just that distant corner which is still whole,
18	溫暖，/明朗，/堅固/而/蓬勃/生/春。	Warm, bright, strong and flourishing.

⁶⁹⁸ For L6 and L7, Kai-yu Hsu's version, from Hsu 1964, 185, is reproduced here (with modifications made to L6 originally translated by Hsu as "(Where spring brings a belt of brocade to the dike," and "young" added to L7) rather than Gregory B. Lee's, which reads "(In the springtime, the dike-top flourishes like a tapestry,/ The young willow branches broken in two emit a rare fragrance.)"

- 19 在那上面，/我/用/殘損的/手掌/輕/
撫，
20 像/戀人的/柔/髮，/嬰孩/手中/乳。
21 我/把/全部的/力量/運/在手掌
22 貼/在上面，/寄與/愛/和/一切/希望，
23 因為/只/有/那裡/是/太陽，/是/春，
24 將/驅逐/陰暗，/帶來/蘇生，
25 因為/只/有/那裡/我們/不像/牲口/一
樣/活，
26 螻蟻/一樣/死...../那裡，/永恆的/中
國！
- Over there I touch lightly with my injured hand,
Like a lover's soft hair, like a breast in a baby's hands.
Putting all my strength into my hand
I hold it firm, I place love and all my hope there,
Because only there, is there sun, is there spring,
To express darkness, and bring rebirth,
Because only there will we have a life different to
animals,
A death different to that of ants...Only there, in
everlasting China!

(M6) Yu Guangzhong's 余光中 "Xiang chou" 鄉愁 (Nostalgia, 1972):

T	鄉愁	Nostalgia
S1		
1	小時候	When I was young,
2	鄉愁/是/一枚/小小的/郵票	Nostalgia was a tiny, tiny stamp,
3	我/在/這頭	Me on this side,
4	母親/在/那頭	Mother on the other side.
S2		
5	長大/後	When I grew up,
6	鄉愁/是/一張/窄窄的/船票	Nostalgia was a narrow boat ticket,
7	我/在/這頭	Me on this side,
8	新娘/在/那頭	My bride on the other side.
S3		
9	後來/啊	But later on,
10	鄉愁/是/一方/矮矮的/墳墓	Nostalgia was a lowly grave,
11	我/在/外頭	Me on the outside,
12	母親/在/裏頭	Mother on the inside.
S4		
13	而/現在	And at present,
14	鄉愁/是/一灣/淺淺的/海峽	Nostalgia becomes a shallow strait,
15	我/在/這頭	Me on this side,
16	大陸/在/那頭	Mainland on the other side.

(M7) Gu Cheng's 顧城 "Yidairen" 一代人 (This Generation, 1979):

T	一/代/人	This Generation
1	黑夜/給了/我/黑色的/眼睛	Dark night has given me dark eyes
2	我/卻/用/它/尋找/光明	With which I search for light.

(M8) Gu Cheng's 顧城 "Yuan he jin" 遠和近 (Far and Near, 1980):

T	遠/和/近	Far and Near
S1		
1	你，	You
2	一會/看/我	Now look at me,
3	一會/看/雲。	Now look at the clouds.
S2		
4	我/覺得	I feel
5	你/看/我/時/很/遠，	You are very far when you look at me,
6	你/看/雲/時/很/近。	Very close when you look at the clouds.

(M9) Zheng Chouyu's 鄭愁予 "Cuo wu" 錯誤 (A Mistake, 1955):

T	錯/誤	A mistake
S1		
1	我/打/江南/走/過	I go by south of the Yangtze River
2	那/等/在/季節裡的/容顏	Those faces waiting in the seasons
3	如/蓮花的/開/落	Are like lotus flowers having their bloom and doom
S2		
4	東風/不/來/ 三月的/柳絮/不/飛	Without the east wind, the willow catkin of March will never fly
5	你底/心/如/小小的/寂寞的/城	Your heart is like a tiny solitary town
6	恰若/青石的/街道/向/晚	Just like bluestone-paved streets pointing towards the evening
7	蹣音/不/響/ 三月的/春帷/不/揭	Only when footsteps are heard that the spring curtain of March is raised
8	你底/心/是/小小的/窗扉/緊/掩	Your heart is the tiny casement tightly closed

S3

- 9 我/達達的/馬蹄聲/是/美麗的/錯誤 The da da of my horse's hoofbeat is a beautiful
mistake
- 10 我/不是/歸/人，/是/個/過/客…… I'm not the one returning, but the one passing by...

(M10) Tian Han's 田漢 “Ye” 夜 (Night, 1920):

T	夜	Night
1	旋律的/世界	A melodic world
2	沉默的/大海？	A silent ocean?
3	淒淒 ⁶⁹⁹ 的/是/甚麼/聲音？	What is the sound of sadness?
4	悠悠的/是/甚麼/情緒？	What is the emotion of lasting sadness?
5	我自己/也/難/索/解！	Even I myself am puzzled!
6	像/一枝/蘆葉/臨風	Like a branchful of reed leaves facing the wind
7	時而/歌舞，	Occasionally singing and dancing,
8	時而/悲哀，	Occasionally feeling sorrowful,
9	時而/驚駭。	Occasionally feeling terrified.

(M11) Guo Moruo's 郭沫若 “Lizai diqiu bianshang fanghao” 立在地球邊上放號
(Standing at the edge of the globe and roaring, 1921):

T	立在/地球/邊上/放號	Standing at the edge of the globe and roaring
1	無數的/白雲/正在/空中/怒湧	Innumerable white clouds are gushing and fluxing in the sky
2	啊啊！/好/幅/壯麗的/北冰洋的/晴/景 /哟！	Oh oh! What a magnificent view of the Arctic Ocean's fine weather!
3	無限的/太平洋/提起/他/全身的/力量/ 來/要/把/地球/推倒。	With all the might in his body the boundless Pacific Ocean tries to push the globe over.
4	啊啊！/我/眼前/來了的/滾滾的/洪濤/ /哟！	Oh oh! Such are the big waves rolling over and reaching my eyes!
5	啊啊！/不斷的/毀壞，/不斷的/創造， /不斷的/努力/哟！	Oh oh! Continuously destroying, continuously creating, continuously striving!
6	啊啊！/力/哟！/力/哟！	Oh oh! It's power! It's power!
7	力的/繪畫，/力的/舞蹈，/力的/音樂，	Painting of power, dancing of power, music of power,

⁶⁹⁹ The original reads like the repetition of a character composed of the radical “口” and the component “妻”, which is not the common usage, and is thus changed here as the usual character “淒”.

	/力的/詩歌，/力的	poetry of power, rhythm of
8	Rhythm/哟！	Power!

(M12) Dai Wangshu's 戴望舒 "Xiao Hong mupan kouzhan" 蕭紅墓畔口占
(Composing Offhandedly at Xiao Hong's Grave, 1944):

T	蕭紅/墓/畔/口占	Composing Offhandedly at Xiao Hong's Grave
1	走/六小時/寂寞的/長/途，	After taking a long and lonely route of six hours,
2	到/你/頭邊/放/一束/紅/山茶，	I lay down a bouquet of red camellia by your head.
3	我/等待着，/長/夜/漫漫，	While I'm waiting, the night is getting longer,
4	你/卻/臥/聽着/海濤/閑話。	And you, lying there, just listen to the idle chatting of sea waves.
D	一九四四年十一月二十日	20th November 1944

(M13) Luo Fu's 洛夫 "Yinwei feng de yuangu" 因為風的緣故 (Because of the Wind, 1981):

T	因為/風的/緣故	Because of the Wind
S1		
1	昨日/我/沿着/河/岸	Yesterday, along the bank of river, I
2	漫步/到	Rambled to
3	蘆葦/彎腰/喝水的/地方	Where the reeds bent over to drink water,
4	順便/請/煙囪	And, taking the opportunity, asked the chimney
5	在天空/為我/寫/一封長長的信	To write on my behalf a very long letter,
6	潦/是/潦草/了/些	Though a bit illegible.
7	而/我的/心/意	Yet my heart and mind
8	則/明亮/亦/如/你/窗前的/燭光	Were as bright as the candlelight facing your window.
9	稍/有/曖昧之/處	If there happened to be any vagueness,
10	勢/所難免	It was simply unavoidable
11	因為/風的/緣故	Because of the wind.
S2		
12	此信/你/能否/看懂/並/不重要	Whether you understand the letter or not is nothing important.
13	重要的/是	What's important is:
14	你/務必要/在/雛菊/尚未/全部/凋零/ 之前	You must, before all the daisies are to wither,

15	趕快/發怒，/或者/發笑	Hurry up to show your anger, or your smile,
16	趕快/從/箱子/裡/找出/我/那件/薄衫 子	Hurry up to get my thin shirt out of the chest,
17	趕快/對/鏡/梳/你/那/又黑又柔的/嫵 媚	Hurry up to comb your charming hair so black and soft in the mirror,
18	然後/以/整生的/愛	And then with your love of whole life
19	點燃/一盞燈	To light up a lamp.
20	我/是/火	I am a fire
21	隨時/可能/熄滅	Which can extinguish at any time
22	因為/風的/緣故	Because of the wind.

Classical Poem

(C1) Li Shangyin's 李商隱 (812-858) "Le you yuan" 樂遊原 (Leyou Height, undated):

T	樂遊原 ⁷⁰⁰	Leyou Height
1	向晚/意/不適	Toward evening I feel disconsolate;
2	驅/車/登/古/原	So I drive my carriage up the ancient heights.
3	夕陽/無限/好	The setting sun has infinite beauty --
4	只是/近/黃昏	Only, the time is approaching nightfall.

(C2) Liu Zongyuan's 柳宗元 (773-819) "Jiang xue" 江雪 (River snow, undated):

T	江雪	River snow
1	千/山/鳥/飛/絕	A thousand mountains, flights of birds are gone,
2	萬/徑/人/蹤/滅	Ten thousand paths, the tracks of people vanished.
3	孤/舟/蓑/笠/翁	In a lone boat an old man in rain hat and raincoat
4	獨/釣/寒/江/雪	Fishes alone in the snow of the cold river.

⁷⁰⁰ This is the name of a "[f]amous resort situated to the south of Ch'ang-an [i.e. Chang'an] overlooking the capital city". See James Liu 1969, 160.

(C3) Li Bai's "Jing ye si" 靜夜思 (Meditating on a Silent Night, undated):

T	靜夜思	Meditating on a Silent Night
1	床/前/明月/光	Bright moonlight at the foot of my bed;
2	疑是/地上/霜	I thought it was frost on the floor.
3	舉頭/望/明月	Looking up I saw the bright moon;
4	低頭/思/故鄉	Looking down my thoughts turned to home.

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